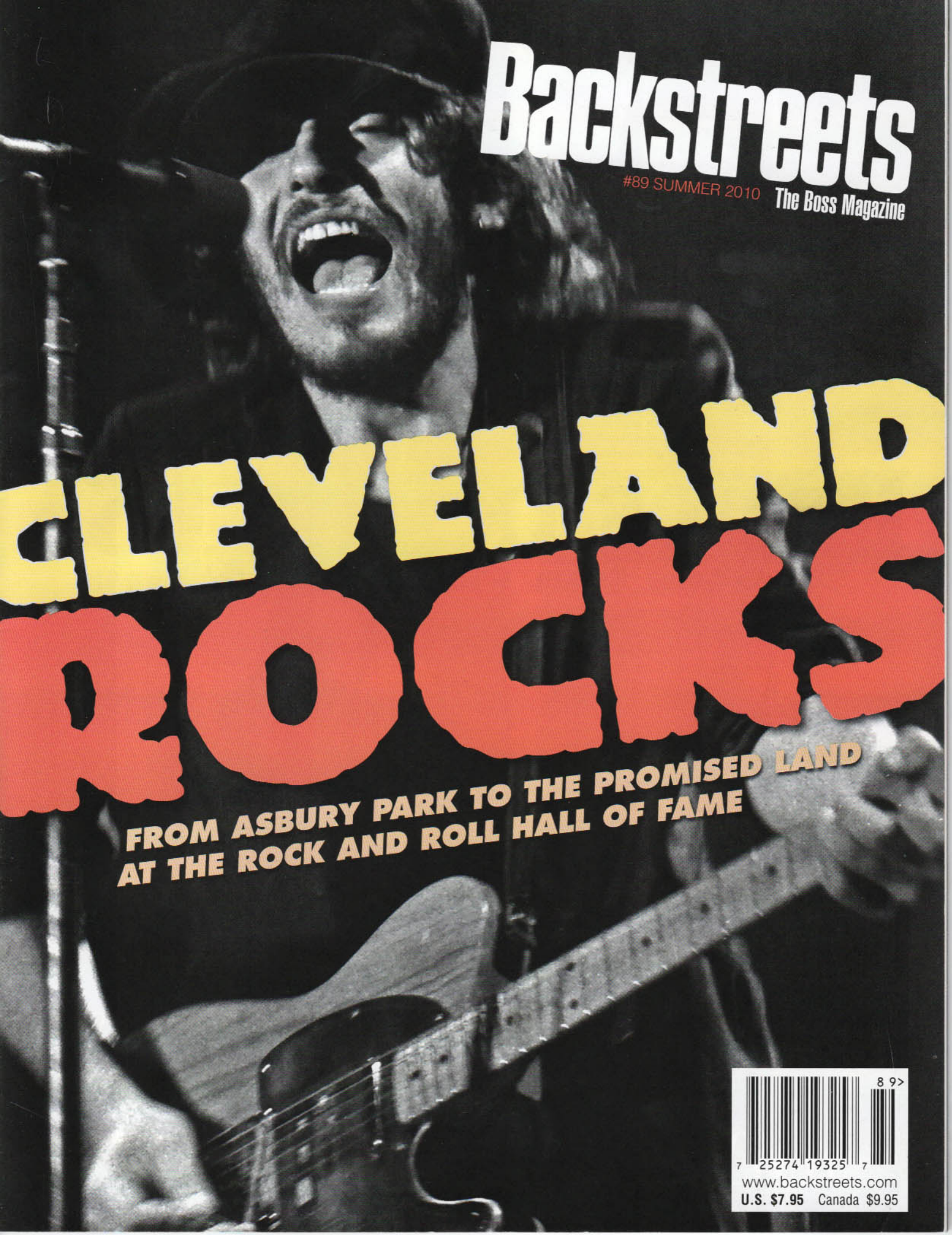
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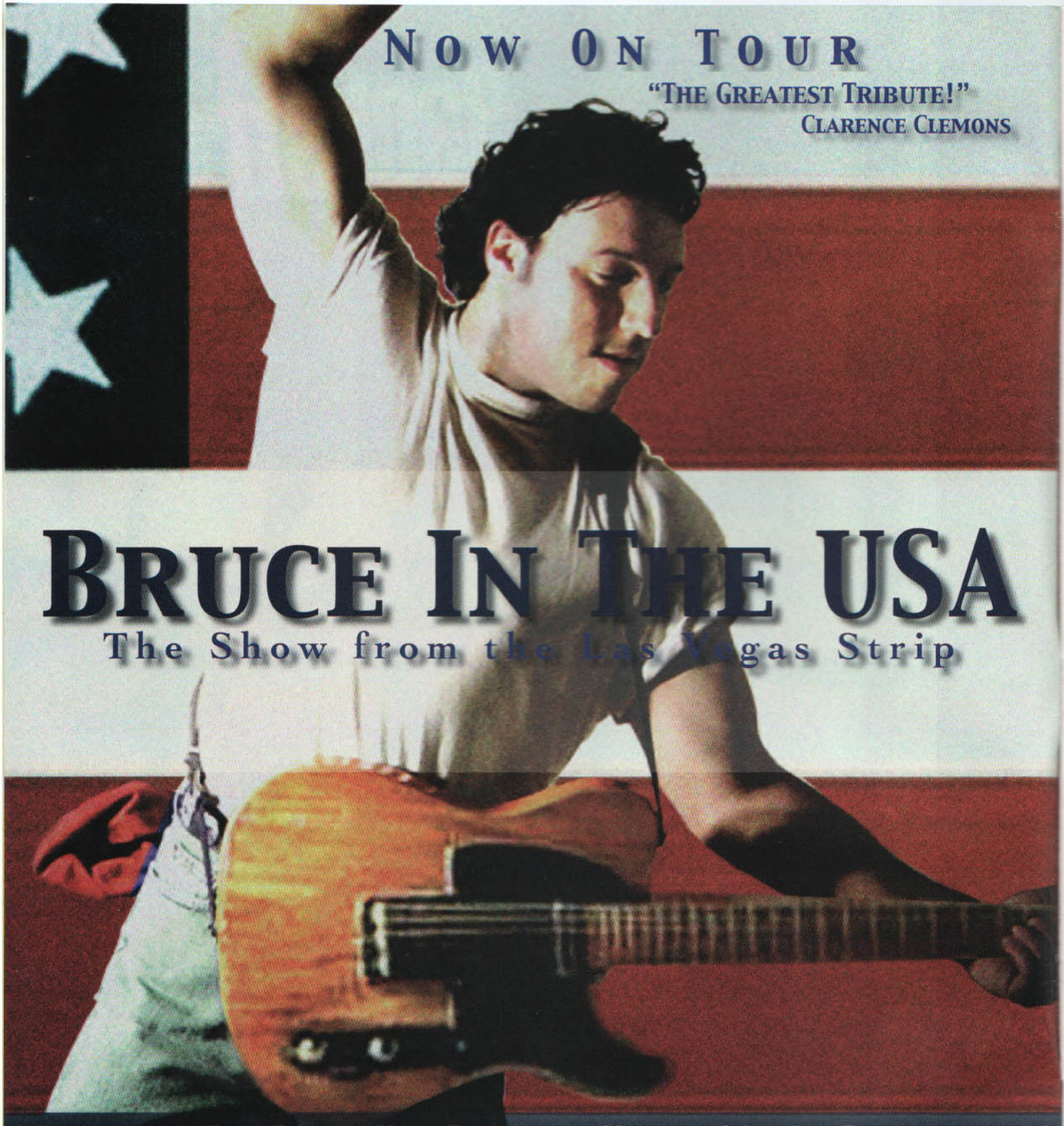

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"Sell out crowds are on their feet from the first song to the last!"

JANET MACOSKA PHOTO

Feeling the heat in Cleveland, October 1980

Backstreets

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Manufactured and printed in the United States of America

Backstreets (ISSN 0746-990X) is published quarterly by the Backstreets Publishing Empire, Inc., 1818 MLK Jr. Blvd #300, Chapel Hill, NC 27514 with offices at 200 N Greensboro St #D-2d, Carrboro, NC 27510. Please address all correspondence to *Backstreets*, 1818 MLK Jr. Blvd #300, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. Website: www.backstreets.com. E-mail: editor@backstreets.com (for letters to the editor); orders@backstreets.com (for subscriptions). Subscriptions are available for $28 a year, $48 for two years, or $66 for three years in the US and Canada (in US funds only); or for overseas airmail, rates are $36 a year, $64 for two years, or $90 for three years (in US funds only).

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Periodicals postage paid at Chapel Hill, NC, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Please send all address changes to *Backstreets*, 1818 MLK Jr. Blvd #300, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. Thank you. *Backstreets* is an independent publication and is not officially associated with any of the performers we write about or their record companies.

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#89 Vol. 23, No. 1
www.backstreets.com

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COVER

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April 1976, Allen Theatre
Cleveland, OH / Janet Macoska Photo

OFF THE WALL

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN
October 1980, Richfield Coliseum
Cleveland, OH / Janet Macoska Photo

LETTERS

GET THAT FEELING

Dear Editor:

I've been a lifetime subscriber to *Backstreets* since issue #1 (I think I was subscribing back then... well, doesn't matter, as I have every issue). I just want to say thank you for the "Last Carnival" issue *[Backstreets* #88]. I've been reading it in small doses, since I tend to tear up after reading everyone's memories of Danny. It is the most mature and "deep" issue you've ever published. Death is not something we like to talk about, and I think Danny's death has touched every fan. I just wanted to say thank you for this amazing labor of love.

Larry Seiden
San Jose, CA

Dear Editor:

Great job on the new issue. It's a thing of beauty, the photography and layout are exceptional. I must admit, I do miss having a show-by-show report from the Magic and Working on a Dream tours, but I understand your reasoning behind the decision. It would have taken an entire issue just to accomplish that! Going forth, I would love to see that included for future tours. I'm an old fogey: I still miss calling the Backstreets Hotline to get my news...

Tom Friedrich
Austin, TX

UNDER THE GUN

Dear Editor:

I feel drawn to share a short but terrifying experience from this past Memorial Day weekend, as we shopped early on Sunday morning at our local Target Superstore. We reside in Cary, NC, in the greater Raleigh-Durham area—no more than 20 minutes from the Backstreets office. My wife, our four-year-old daughter Sophia and I were in the produce area when a murder/suicide shooting took place.

I was sifting through apples on an island display when two very loud gunshots were fired. The first shot stunned everyone and locked us all in place. Following the second, panic and screaming set in. At this point, I ducked down, and all I could think of was locating my wife and daughter in order to get them out. After spotting them in the bakery area, stunned and scared, I led them back to my hiding spot near the checkout aisles. Most of the traffic was moving to the rear of the store, away from the cash registers where the shots were fired—just 20 yards away from where we were crouched.

As I was hiding behind the apple stand, I instinctively grabbed an apple in the event I came face to face with this guy. Not much of a threat versus a Glock semi-automatic pistol with three clips... but something I could launch if need be. I was scared shitless, but I had to do anything within my power to protect my girls. I looked up to see if the escape route was clear, and we made our dash. My wife was close to being in shock as we pushed one another toward our parked car, keeping low until we finally reached it.

At this point, the gunman was still alive in the store. The victim had been his one-time, 58-year-old girlfriend, a mother, grandmother, and a brand new U.S. citizen. People were hiding in walk-in refrigerators, under dress racks, etc. Police soon confronted the assailant, and as they demanded he relinquish his weapon, he took his own life.

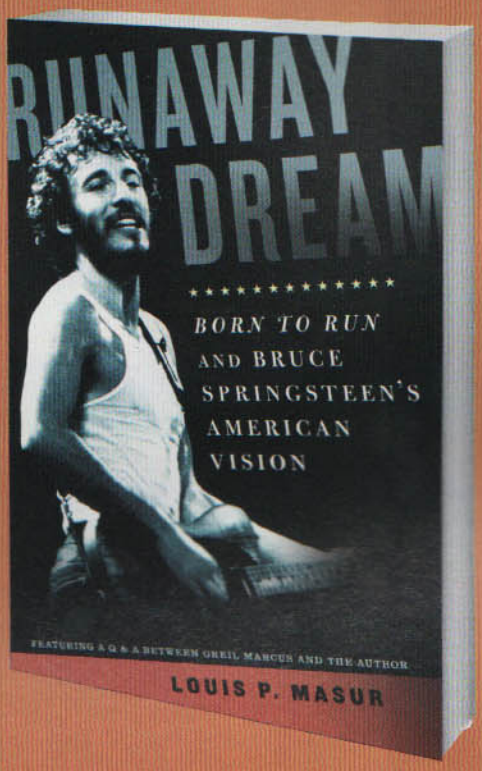
What makes this story relevant to *Backstreets* and Springsteen? Well, on our way to Target that morning, I had a Bruce CD blaring as we drove, as usual. As we made our escape, we threw our daughter into the back seat of the car and could not even afford the time to strap her into her child restraint seat. She didn't quite understand what was transpiring, but picked up that something serious was unfolding. As we drove away, the adrenalin was running high; I didn't even notice the music was on. I drove as aggressively as I could to get well clear of the scene. By now, police cars from every direction were streaming into the area. It wasn't until my wife Cindy turned down the volume—a

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BOSS.

"In *Runaway Dream*, Louis P. Masur dissects the making of the album and the legacy it has left behind with the meticulous eye of a scholar and the unabashed affection of a true fan."—Associated Press

"Masur, as his title suggests, has 'an affinity for the American themes that permeate [Springsteen's] work,' and his book is essentially an extended cultural essay about those."—*Chicago Tribune*

"Louis Masur combines scholarly rigor and journalistic accessibility. These talents are vividly on display in *Runaway Dream*, which uses *Born to Run* as a synecdoche for understanding Springsteen's career as a whole."
—Jim Cullen, *History News Network*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FEATURING A Q & A BETWEEN GREIL MARCUS AND THE AUTHOR
LOUIS P. MASUR

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faux pas during normal times—when Sophia asked me if listening to Bruce was making me feel calmer. I only realized later how mind-blowing that question was, given her age. Pretty intuitive for a kid who ranks Bruce at number three, right up there behind Taylor Swift and Miley Cyrus.

I count on Bruce's offerings in many different ways at different times to smooth the waters. And it's true, "The Promised Land" (a live version) in all its glory never sounded better.

I noticed the apple in the cup holder in my car the next morning. I still have it.

Jon Wolfe
Cary, NC

WHEN YOU DANCE

Dear Editor:

On June 15, 2000, I went with Deborah Soroky to a Boss Club reunion. My life changed forever when Randy Bennett walked in the door. We had our first date the next night, appropriately enough to see *High Fidelity*. Ten years later, Randy is my best friend and still lives in L.A. with countless other Bruce Springsteen fans. As Randy says, "Going to see Bruce is like hanging out with 10,000 of my closest friends."

This weekend, we received the inconceivably bad news that Boss Club founder Seth Marsh passed away. Here are excerpts of some Boss Clubbers' reactions:

Deborah Soroky: "When I walked in the first time I felt I died and went to heaven. I couldn't wait for Tuesday nights, singing and dancing for hours, often to rare recordings from Seth's private collection, rededicating ourselves to the idea that 'It ain't no sin to be glad you're alive.' We owe those magical times and truly glorious nights to Seth. Thank you, Seth, from the bottom of my heart."

Eileen Ehmann: "Seth was a beacon of Bruceness. Tuesday nights in the '80s were a ritual of much love, much fun and all things Bruce."

Heidi Wiesenfelder: "I made few Springsteen connections on the USC campus, but junior year I found a little piece of heaven at the Boss Club. I forged lifetime friendships and every week experienced the joy of sharing Bruce's music with others. Getting up for an 8 a.m. class was rough, but so worth it!"

Darryl Morden: "Bruce has spoken in concert after concert about community, and that's what the Boss Club gave many of us: a community of friends, from our 'dance circle' that grew in number each year, to the joy of catching up at the '99 reunion shows, to now, with families and diverging lives, yet still staying in touch."

Mary Ehmann: "The Boss Club is 'the ties that bind' for Springsteen fans. We didn't just dance, we played plastic musical instruments with individual solos. At first, Seth didn't seem to like our taking over the dance floor, but he eventually joined our circle many times. He appreciated our coming together to share a few hours with him and one of the best rock 'n' roll bands ever. May he rest in peace."

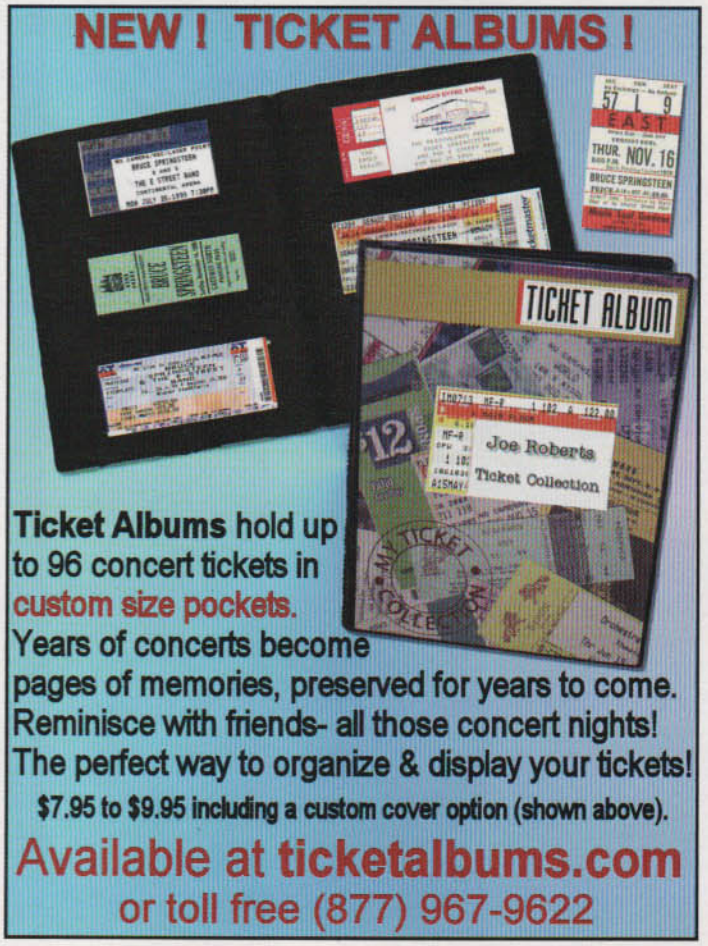
Bob Hersch: "It is amazing how many lives one person can affect. I can't imagine how different my life would be if I had not gone that first night. So many of my current friends are people I met either at the Boss Club or through Boss Clubbers. Seth, you will be missed."

Brandee Williams Lara: "Seth, through Bruce, touched more lives (and generations) than he ever knew." Brandee would know: her son Sean is also a fan.

Tom Vitorino: "Most Springsteen fans are not unlike many characters in Bruce's music: outsiders trying to find a connection and a safe place to fit in. I was so fortunate to have been invited into this club during the '99 reunion tour. I met some of the finest people who still remain in my life. Seth might be gone, but the relationships he forged through Bruce's music will last forever. I wish him Godspeed on his journey; I'm pretty sure he's starting a Boss Club up in heaven tonight."

Personally, I just want to thank this kind group of people who took me in and made me feel a part of it. Seth, please give Danny our love... we thank you both for the joy that the music of Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band has brought us all of these years. You are both missed beyond belief.

Sue Luftglass and the Los Angeles Boss Club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I want you... to want... to play these songs!

Big in London

By Christopher Phillips

A couple years back, I was champing at the bit for the release of *Budokan!*, the 25th anniversary package for Cheap Trick's classic multi-platinum live album. As a longtime fan of the boys from Rockford, of course I had a movie in my head for that one, but a big draw for the new set was a DVD that would finally let me see how the whole thing really looked. One of the hallmarks of the recording is the Japanese audience—that squealing, screaming, shrieking crowd that's the sonic archetype for what it means to be "big in Japan." But in the concert film, the band could practically be anywhere: behind Bun E. Carlos's drums, all is dark; in front of the stage, it's practically pitch black, too. Nevermind getting to watch the crowd go nuts; the band might as well be playing inside a black box. It's still a great performance, but it's like watching a show with blinders on.

Contrast that with *London Calling: Live in Hyde Park*, released June 22 as a two-DVD set, where the crowd participation so inherent to a Springsteen concert is just as much a part of the film. Of course, daylight helps. But the sweeping crowd shots, the lingering POVs looking outward from the stage, the close-ups of signs and fans, all help create a viewing experience that tears away those blinders and sucks you in. It's reminiscent of the still-exhilarating "Born to Run" video—and in terms of capturing what a Springsteen show feels like, it's probably my favorite thing to watch since.

"It's a completely different approach from all the other concert films," says the film's editor, Thom Zimny. "You think about *Live in New York City*, there were not really any shots of the audience participation. With this concert, you get not only the audience, you get the background. You get the chaos of backstage. You're seeing detail in the crowd that's amazing—you're seeing expressions and excitement—and also you're seeing the dirtiness and the beauty of that rock 'n' roll stage—the cables, and the cases, and all that. It's not lost in any stage lighting or a night environment."

I had the good fortune of getting to see *London Calling* with Zimny—who, as we watched, gave a great deal of credit to director Chris Hilson and to Springsteen himself for the feel of the new film. But as his commentary continued throughout (other than the times when we just had to crank up the volume), it became clear just how much of Thom's own sweat is there in each shot. Much more of our conversation will be in the next issue of *Backstreets*, as Thom's commentary essentially provides us a "Making Of" feature for the new DVD. (And he's been a busy guy: as we go to press, news has just hit of his directorial effort on *The Promise: The Making of Darkness on the Edge of Town*, a film that will be included with the forthcoming *Darkness* reissue. We'll hope to have a chance to speak with him about that one, too).

One of my favorite moments in *London Calling* is seeing the long haul Bruce makes to get close to the crowd, trekking up and down those long steps. "The stairs literally are like a character in the concert film," Zimny laughs. And as Springsteen ventures back down yet again to collect signs from the crowd, the whole request portion strikes me as even cooler, more daring and more generous in retrospect (even if the songs he picked for Hyde Park weren't exactly stumpers). Gimmicky? Sure. But I love a good gimmick. I've always regretted missing Elvis Costello's 1986 tour, with the "Spectacular Spinning Songbook," where songs were determined by a huge onstage Wheel of Fortune. Well, for a few songs every night, Bruce and the band left even more up to chance, and it resulted in the most memorable moments from many of the shows I saw—"Seventh Son" and "Hang on Sloopy" in Greensboro, "Roll Over Beethoven," "Higher and "Higher."...

Covers were where the fun was when it came to 2009 tour requests; it was great to see them not only back as a vital part of an E Street Band show again, but also well represented on the *London Calling* set: the Clash opener, "Good Lovin'," "Hard Times," and don't forget "Trapped," also captured on film for the first time. Bruce has kept that ball rolling post-tour, with his 2010 appearances *[see page 10]* adding new ones to the tally like "Sea of Heartbreak," "Beast of Burden," "Don't Stop Believin'," and—who'd have thought it would feel so right—"Cuts Like a Knife."

If Bryan Adams is in play, I'd say there's nothing that's off the table. I never did hold up a sign myself. So, inspired by those sign-waving Londoners, '80s Night at the Rainforest Benefit, and the intrepid, unstumpable E Street Band, I've taken the liberty of compiling a list of the covers I'd like to see them tackle next.

1. Rolling Stones, "Rip This Joint": Exile on E Street. "Rocks Off" might be my number-one pick if Bruce had a horn section in tow, but "Rip This Joint" would smoke no matter what—well, as long as Steve is there to share the mic. The Professor hammers on the piano, and blow, Big Man, blow! ("Happy" might be on the list, had Southside Johnny not already nailed it with the Jukes on *Into the Harbour.)*

2. Van Morrison, "Domino": We'll need that horn section after all. "Brown Eyed Girl" (played 11/3/09 in Charlotte), fine... but this is how I'd really like to see the Boss tip his hat to Van the Man. Lord have mercy.

3. Sex Pistols, "Liar": We know he's a fan—as DJ, Bruce spun "God Save the Queen" (saying the Pistols were "the folks who re-started it all"), and elsewhere he named John Lydon as a favorite singer. Stranger things have happened.

4. Freda Payne, "Band of Gold"; or Honey Cone, "Sittin' on a Time Bomb": Mmm, Holland-Dozier-Holland in the '70s. "Band of Gold" combines the girl-group sound with such dark, desolate beauty, it'd be worthy of pairing with the *Tracks* version of "Stolen Car."

5. Frightened Rabbit, "The Loneliness and the Scream": *"It wasn't me / I didn't dig this ditch / I was walking for weeks before I fell in."* Springsteen has already covered Arcade Fire and sung with The Hold Steady's Craig Finn; this would be another perfect meet-up with the next generation of great songwriting.

6. Lucinda Williams, "Crescent City": Would have liked to hear this broken out on the Seeger Sessions tour (with Emmylou Harris's version as the template). But considering how beleaguered the Gulf Coast remains, the time is still right.

7. The Modern Lovers, "Roadrunner": Before "Ramrod," there was this propulsive, minimalist road rocker; before "Open All Night," this ode to late-night cruising down the turnpike with the radio on.

8. Chris Whitley, "Big Sky Country": Arguably the late, great Whitley's finest moment, this song played over the P.A. after so many Springsteen concerts, it almost feels like part of the repertoire already.

9. Freddy "Boom Boom" Cannon, "Palisades Park": Speaking of P.A. tunes, this Tunnel tour intro has never actually gotten the live treatment from Bruce—it ought to join "Tallahassee Lassie" in the Cannon canon.

10. Cheap Trick, "Surrender": Who knows if Springsteen's love for the Raspberries' power pop extends to this band, but we do know this one makes the girls scream....

That's my list, at least today. What's yours?

THE NEWS

In a city of light and spire

Ellis Island Foundation Honors Bruce

By Christopher Phillips

In his 2006 song "American Land," Bruce Springsteen pays wry tribute to the United States as a nation of immigrants, to "the hands that built the country." On April 22, that song practically came to life—right down to, as he sings, the "Zerillis too"—when Springsteen was honored by the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation. As a 2010 recipient of the Ellis Island Family Heritage Award, Bruce made it clear that he was there to honor those who had gone before—the masses of "hopeful wanderers" who came to this country as well as his own forebears—making a point of bringing his mother and her two sisters on stage to share the honor.

The Ellis Island Family Heritage Awards celebrate the Golden Door to America for the 17 million immigrants who came to this country through the Port of New York and Ellis Island. This year's ninth annual awards, at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, honored Springsteen in the Entertainment category as well as Peter G. Peterson (Business). Receiving the B.C. Forbes Peopling of America Award were Avon Products CEO Andrea Jung (Business) and NBA All-Star Dikembe Mutombo (Sports).

Introducing Bruce, *NBC Nightly News* anchor Brian Williams described him as "a man who has embodied the American spirit for an entire generation. Generations, really. His music entertained and inspired while his image as a champion of the working-class made him a hero." Williams continued, tracing Springsteen's ancestry from an Ellis Island arrival to "the humble beginnings and extraordinary career of this American icon":

At the dawn of the 20th century, October 3, 1900, 12-year-old Antonio Zerilli landed at Ellis Island with his mother Raffaela, his four sisters, and their paternal grandfather. They had left Italy two-and-a-half weeks earlier aboard the Tartar Prince to reunite with Antonio's father Raffaele, who had arrived three years earlier and had settled in the West Village of New York City.

Young Antonio became a lawyer and moved to 75th Street in Brooklyn, where he lived with his Italian immigrant wife Adela (nee' Sorrentino) and their three daughters. Their youngest daughter, Adele, would eventually marry Douglas Springsteen, whose Irish ancestors had settled in Freehold, New Jersey half a century before.

Bruce Frederick Springsteen, their oldest child, was born in 1949. He and his two sisters were raised in a working-class family which struggled to send Springsteen to a strict Catholic school. To escape, Springsteen taught himself to play the guitar and, at age 16, his mother borrowed some money to buy her son a $60 Kent guitar for Christmas. Springsteen soon started his first rock band and played small Jersey Shore venues for the rest of the decade...."

Accepting the award, Bruce reminisced about his maternal grandfather Anthony, and he thanked his father Douglas and the Irish side of his family as well. But he saved his highest praise for his mother and his two aunts, whom he invited to the stage—"Anthony's three daughters," Zerillis all, and faces familiar to many fans who have seen them dance on stage with Bruce. "These fabulous women, they are my living connection to my heritage," Bruce said, "to Ellis Island, and to me, what it means to come here as an immigrant." *[See sidebar next page for Springsteen's complete remarks.]*

DIANE BONDAREFF PHOTOS

'THEY PUT THE ROCK 'N' ROLL IN ME'

Bruce accepts the 2010 Ellis Island Family Heritage Award — and thanks the fabulous Zerilli sisters

Thank you. Brian, if you ever get tired of the nightly news, I've got a job for you as Public Relations man for me.

Ellis Island is an important place. I'm glad to be here with my fellow honorees today. For me, Ellis Island's about: you can't really know who we are or where we're going unless you know who we were, where we came from; you really can't understand what it means or might mean to be an American unless you know what it meant to be an American.

So I'm glad to be a part of the ceremony, not just to honor my grandfather, Anthony Zerilli, who came through Ellis Island at the turn of the century. He was unable to read or write, went to New York University, he became a lawyer, he made a short stop at Sing Sing prison... but that's another story. Into each life *[laughs]*... He went on to lead a very inspirational—he was this garrulous, booming-voiced, small, Italian man who seemed like a rock star to me when I was a kid. I also want to remember Adelina Sorrentino, that's my grandmother. She arrived at 28, she lived to be 100 in Freehold, New Jersey, and never spoke any English. So much for assimilation.

I also need to thank the O'Farrels and the O'Hagans, that's my Irish clan; the McNicholases, they raised me as a child in Freehold, NJ. My lovely wife Patti, Sicilian and Scots-Irish, and together we carry on the Irish/Italian mating tradition of central New Jersey.

But I specifically came here today to thank three women, and so I'm gonna ask them—they said it was okay if I had them come up on stage, so I'm gonna ask my mom and two aunts to come up and stand with me.

I've grown up with these women, they're Anthony's three daughters: my mother Adele, and my two aunts Dora [Kirby] and Ida [Urbelis]. They've personified for me the tough optimism and the work ethic of first-generation born American citizens. They lifted my spirit, I think they put the rock 'n' roll in me, and provided me with a place and rooted me into an experience that's filled my family and all of my work with great, great meaning.

My Aunt Dora is 90—she's still cranking out people's income taxes. So if you need help with your taxes... I know it's a little late now, but next year... she's still available. She graduated from college with honors at 67 years old.

My Aunt Ida is 87. She was a member of the International Garment Workers Union, worked in a coat factory for 20 years, then went on to cut hair in the same salon in Eatontown for the last *50* years. You can still get your hair cut by her, on Wednesdays and Fridays at Macy's in Eatontown.

And my mom, of course, Adele, she's 85 next week. She worked as a legal secretary for 47 years, married to a turbulent Irishman—I have to thank my father Douglas, also. Now, thanks to a fortunate son, she resides in modest luxury in an undisclosed location *[laughs]*. She held our family together under great, great, great difficulty. You know, she did an unusual thing: her parents were relatively well-off, and she married into poverty and served there for a good part of her life, and it really held us all together. Thank you, Mom, I love you very much.

These fabulous women, they are my living connection to my heritage, to Ellis Island, and to me, what it means to come here as an immigrant. So I love and admire you all and thank you very much. *[To them:]* You heading out? Stay! Soak it up! Enjoy! When's this gonna happen again? *[Laughs.]* Soak it up!

With all the anti-immigrant furor out there, it's good to remember that we're a nation of immigrants, of hopeful wanderers. And we cannot know who is coming across our borders today whose story will add a significant page to the American story. Who will work hard, who will raise a family, whose new blood will strengthen the good fabric holding our nation together.

So I am proud to be here today as another hopeful wanderer—a son of Italy, of Ireland, and of Holland—and to wish God's grace, safe passage, and good fortune to those who are crossing our borders today. And to give thanks to those who have come before, whose journey, courage, and sacrifice made me an American. Thank you.

Collaborations fill top half of 2010

A Little Help For My Friends

When Ringo Starr celebrated his 70th birthday in July with an All-Starr show at Radio City Music Hall, a churning rumor mill had it that Bruce Springsteen would be one of many well-wishers to take part in the show (no matter that he was actually in Lake Placid at the time). The big story of the night turned out to be Sir Paul McCartney's surprise guest spot; E Streeters Max Weinberg, Steve Van Zandt, and Nils Lofgren all shared the stage as well. But a Boss sighting would have been very much in keeping with Springsteen's 2010 performances to date, as he's been putting in regular appearances this off-tour year to play with friends both old and new, from Rosanne Cash to Lady Gaga.

Springsteen center stage with Light of Day organizer Bob Benjamin, January 16, 2010.

MICHAEL ZORN PHOTO

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PARAMOUNT THEATER
ASBURY PARK, NJ

With Willie Nile, Jesse Malin, and Joe Grushecky & the Houserockers

Light of Day celebrated its tenth anniversary in January, and to no one's surprise, Bruce Springsteen performed a lengthy, spirited set at Asbury Park's Paramount Theater. After a pre-show soundcheck with Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers, Bruce strolled onstage early in the evening to join fellow troubadour Willie Nile on **"Heaven Help the Lonely."** Bruce later joined another New Yorker, Jesse Malin, for their first-ever live performance of **"Broken Radio."** After Ed Kowalczyk (of the band Live) turned in a strong acoustic set, the Bard of the Boardwalk joined Grushecky's closing set for an 11-song finale. Their opening **"Atlantic City"** was a highlight, followed by **"Code of Silence," "Johnny 99," "Never Be Enough Time," "Darkness on the Edge of Town," "Talking to the King,"** the rarely-played **"Pink Cadillac"** featuring photographer Danny Clinch on blues harp *[see sidebar]*, **"Murder Incorporated,"** and **"Another Thin Line."** The benefit ended with a now-customary jam on Bruce's **"Light of Day,"** and the always dance-friendly **"Twist and Shout."**

—Craig Scupp

JANUARY 22
HOPE FOR HAITI NOW
NEW YORK, NY

With a Sessions Band combo

As well-worn protest songs go, warhorses don't get much more all-purpose than "We Shall Overcome," the anthem popularized by Pete Seeger during the civil rights era. It's just the thing to buck up your stoicism in the face of oppression, whether from The Man or Mother Nature.

So of course, it fell to Bruce Springsteen to perform "We Shall Overcome" at the January 22 "Hope for Haiti Now: A Global Benefit for Earthquake Relief" telethon. The event was broadcast from three different performance sites with Coldplay, Alicia Keys, Stevie Wonder, Ray LaMontagne, Taylor Swift and Madonna among the other participants. The event raised a reported $58 million overnight; a *Hope for Haiti Now* album (featuring Springsteen's live performance) continued the fundraising effort and became the first digital-exclusive title to top the Billboard 200.

Springsteen's slot came up early, in the first 15 minutes of the two-hour broadcast. Introducing **"We Shall Overcome"** as "a small prayer for Haiti," he appeared with a subset of his "Seeger Sessions" band and played a modest rendition that was stripped-down and slowed-down from the 2006 album version.

He started out solo, with Charlie Giordano's accordion and Curt Ramm's mournful trumpet joining in as backup singers Patti Scialfa, Curtis King, Soozie Tyrell and Cindy Mizelle's voices rose. It added the perfect note of gravitas to the evening.

—David Menconi

JANUARY 23
RANNEY SCHOOL BENEFIT
THE STONE PONY
ASBURY PARK, NJ

With the Bobby Bandiera Band, Southside Johnny, and Patti Scialfa

The benefits Bruce Springsteen has played for his childrens' schools have been notoriously private affairs. The hefty ticket prices and restricted access have made the shows pretty much off-limits for most Springsteen fans—unless you happen to be a teacher at the Ranney School in Tinton Falls, or the parent of a student there. If you were, you had the opportunity to buy (or in the case of the teachers, obtain for free) tickets to this benefit at the Stone Pony only a week after Springsteen's Light of Day showing down the boardwalk.

Once again backed by Bobby Bandiera's band, and joined onstage by Ranney School regulars Patti Scialfa and Southside Johnny Lyon, Springsteen played to an audience that included actor Hugh Jackman, who rocked out most of the night from the VIP booth by the soundboard, and NBC newsman (and huge Springsteen fan) Brian Williams, who hung out with his wife at the side of the stage, close to the tequila.

Springsteen took the stage shortly after 8 p.m. and kicked right into **"634-5789,"** the old Wilson Pickett number that has become a staple at these shows. The band was... how shall we say it... loose? Much Patron tequila got passed around, before and during the show. They rolled through **"Out in the Street,"** which featured much crowd participation; a hard-driving **"Cover Me"**; a spirited **"Seven Nights to Rock,"** surprisingly well-known to the crowd; and then a sweaty, sexy **"Spirit in the Night,"** with much *Jersey Shore*-style fist-pumping from the crowd during the "all night!" chorus.

What was already a fun night got a good deal hotter as Southside took the stage for **"Talk to Me."** Southside this night was in a surprisingly good mood, flirting with Patti during the song, rubbing her shoulders, laughing and joking with Bruce. As they busted out

ADAM BRZOSTOSKI PHOTOS

THE REAL JERSEY SHORE

Tim Donnelly on "a night of legend," January 16, 2010

We left the Boss and Big Pussy at the Wonder Bar a little after three a.m. Yeah, you read that right. We left.

The "Real Jersey Shore" night ended a long way from which it began: me on my couch in my Sherpa-lined slippers, toasty in every sense of the word, until giving into to Danny Clinch's "C'mon, what's da matter wit you, huh? Big Pussy is gonna be there!"

It was Light of Day's Saturday night in Asbury, the big one at the Paramount, so of course the rumor mill was spinning at max speed that Springsteen would be in attendance. So I traded my slippahs for some boots—not quite like trading in my wings for some wheels, but you get the point. We took the beach road from Seaside up to Asbury Park for a night that would become one of legend. I'm friggin' serious, too—'twas a night of legend.

The night prior, Light of Day at the Stone Pony (the weekend was superbly produced by Asbury legend and former Asbury Juke Tony Pallagrossi) had Clinch and his Tangiers Band ripping up the joint, and I ain't just saying that because I'm scared of catching the wrath of Tangiers mainstay Lonesome Dave or falling victim to the thousand-yard stare of King B. King. They simply killed it—and killed it again late night at the Langosta Lounge, with guests Jon Grabof on slide guitar and Charlie Giordano of the mighty E Street Band on keys.

So the expectation of a good time in Asbury Park was set as we approached Convention Hall. Armed with his camera and harmonicas, Clinch and I made our way to the stage door where we were greeted by Springsteen and Pittsburgh legend Joe Grushecky, who then asked Clinch to sit in on their set.

As performers like Jesse Malin and our girl Nicole Atkins played wonderfully to the sold-out crowd, I got my first Big Pussy experience. Legally, he's known as Vincent Pastore, but to everyone in the Drty Jrz, he will always be our Big Pussy from *The Sopranos*.

"So, I did dis radio show wit dese friggin' Canadians da utter day," he says to me. "The friggin' guy asks, 'Were you in the body bag when dey threw ya overboard?' I can't believe dis numbnuts Canadian, so friggin' stupid. So I sez ta him, whaddya get hit by hockey pucks in your friggin' head? C'mon! Get the 'f' outta here wit dat."

Ahh... Jersey.

So Clinch comes up to me, grabs me and says, "They want me to do 'Murder Incorporated' with them, I'm not sure I know it." Armed with his iPhone, we listen to the tune in the Grand Arcade with our ears to the device.

Clinch is as comfortable as he's gonna get with the tune as we settle in to watch Bruce join Grushecky's Houserockers for their raucous set. Then all things went hazy when Springsteen stepped up to the mic and said, "I'd like to bring up photographer extraordinaire Danny Clinch for this number." I soon see Grushecky and Springsteen huddle. An audible is called. They will now do "Pink Cadillac" instead of "Murder Inc." "Uh-oh," I thought to myself. With a nod to Clinch, Springsteen has him blowing his harp to open the tune. In essence, for this moment, Clinch is the the Big Man—at least in theory.

"You may think I'm foolish, for the foolish things that I do," sang Springsteen, with one eye on Clinch. "You may wonder how come I love you, when you get on my nerves like you do...."

Like a basketball player at the foul line during a tie game with no time left on the clock, Clinch steps up for his solo, with Springsteen standing two feet from him, pushing him to blow, blow, blow like the four winds. Smiling, rocking, and vamping was Springsteen, eyes wide, legs spread, guitar slinging with his mouth agape at his photographer turned tunesmith.

After the next verse, the biggest blast I have ever heard comes from my man Dan's harmonica. He was bluesy, ballsy, direct, and on point, and the crowd knew it too, bringing the show to a higher level. It was a game changer, a game winner.

I'm standing behind a rocking Big Pussy, who turns to me and says, "Now dat was friggin' great—he's from Toms River? How famous is he? Well he can't be dat famous if he ain't never took a picture of me," he said in jest.

Fast forward to two hours later in the back of the Wonder Bar, where the Boss was handing out tequila shots and Big Pussy says to Clinch, "Hey, when ya gonna take my pitchah, huh?"

"I just did," Clinch said to the unsuspecting hulk of man. "Damn, you're pretty good, ya know dat?" Big Pussy said before we left, nearly breaking our hands while shaking them good-bye, as the Boss played bartender.

With that, Clinch and I walked down Ocean Avenue in the still of the night, laughing our asses off all the way down the beach road home.

"Proud Mary," with Bruce and South trading vocals, it became clear that this was going to be an extra-special night, because Southside was *on*.

After another staple of these benefits, **"Tell Him,"** featured Patti on lead vocals, as usual, and vamping it up with Bruce. They slid into **"Two Hearts"** and **"Jambalaya (On the Bayou),"** the old Hank Williams tune and a real rarity. The Smokey Robinson tune **"You've Really Got a Hold on Me"** featured Bruce, Southside, Patti and Bobby all trading vocals in a sultry take on a classic song. **"Radio Nowhere,"** then **"Waitin' on a Sunny Day"**—let's face it, Bruce *really* loves this one. Before the song, everyone on stage took another shot of tequila, which Springsteen referred to as "New Jersey holy water." The sing-along part was taken by a man—perhaps a principal?—with a really terrible voice. Bring back the kids!

Then came one of the real highlights of the night: **"Sherry Darling,"** which Bruce dedicated to Asbury Park. It featured a lyric change, too: "stuck in traffic down here on 53rd Street" became "stuck in traffic down here on Kingsley Avenue." It's Kingsley *Street*, not Avenue, but, hey, we'll give Bruce a pass because this was just a fun, fun, *fun* version of a great sing-along summer song, performed in the depths of what would turn out to be one of the worst winters in the past 50 years on the Shore. Bruce was bouncing around the stage as Southside picked up the Fender, sat on the drum riser, and started to play. Bruce mocked him: "Southside doesn't know how to play guitar!" But Southside kept playing, and by the end Bruce conceded, "Well, Southside does know how to play guitar... a little." What a blast!

They broke into **"The Fever,"** and it then became really obvious that Southside was stealing the show and having fun doing it. He can certainly hold his own with Springsteen on stage, and you could see that Bruce was loving it. **"Darlington County"** and **"Oh, Pretty Woman"** were followed by **"Brilliant Disguise,"** featuring a great duet with Bruce and Patti, and then Patti took center stage again on **"The Boy From New York City."**

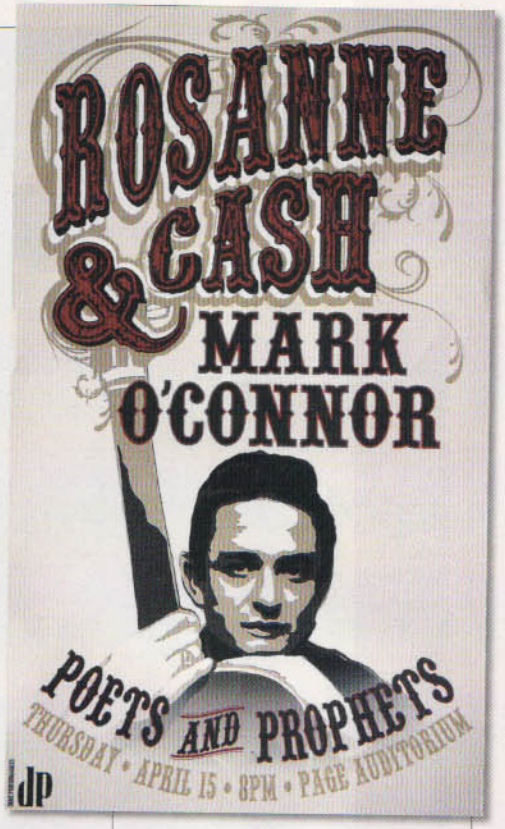
"Pink Cadillac," arguably the highlight at the Light of Day show the week before, came next. Southside, who usually leaves right after he's done with his songs, was still on stage, and he actually stayed out there for most of the night this time. Following **"Dancing in the Dark,"** Southside took the lead on **"Havin' a Party,"** and afterwards Bruce joked, "Southside Johnny! He doesn't want to go home and he *won't* go home!" Southside responded, "Why should I?" and then added, "This is home." And it is, in a way, isn't it? Southside and the Jukes, then featuring some guitar player named Miami Steve Van Zandt, were the Pony's original house band, more than 35 years ago.

A very hot **"Detroit Medley"** featuring Bruce and South was followed by **"Tenth Avenue Freeze-out."** Bruce went out into the audience and sang the first verse while sitting on the front bar of the Pony. People actually gave him his space, and it was an amazing moment. He then sang most of the rest of the song from the dance floor and the edge of the stage before going back up for the end.

"Glory Days," then **"Higher and Higher,"** the latter featuring Southside joining in on lead vocals, had the whole Pony up and rocking hard. Finally, it was **"Twist and Shout."** Shake it up baby, indeed. Half the Pony seemed to be onstage, from teachers, parents, staff, and the Ranney School's headmaster to Brian Williams—I think he got up there, too.

And then it was over: nearly two hours and 45 minutes worth of soul-shaking, earth-quaking tunes reminding us that back when Bruce and Southside were coming up, bands honed their skills in bars, playing for three or four hours at a time with short breaks between sets. And if you couldn't get the crowd to dance, you didn't get another booking. For one night, the Stone Pony hosted what was easily the greatest bar band in the land.

APRIL 15
POETS & PROPHETS
PAGE AUDITORIUM
DURHAM, NC
With Rosanne Cash



There were no whispers, no hushed speculative voices, no widely-reported Bruce sightings in Durham on April 15; indeed, when Rosanne Cash rolled in to town there was no reason to think it was for anything more than just another night to promote *The List*, an album consisting of covers of songs favored by her late father. The news of Springsteen's arrival in the Bull City—to check out Duke University for his daughter, who will be attending beginning this Fall—would come the next day, largely due to his surprise appearance at this gig.

After an opening set by world-class fiddler Mark O'Connor and his band, Cash took to the stage flanked only by upright bass and her husband John Leventhal, who also co-produced *The List*, on guitar. Later on, audience members would fully get the meaning of Cash's dedication of Bob Dylan's "Girl From the North Country" to "Sam," but it wasn't until Cash introduced the Don Gibson classic **"Sea of Heartbreak"** that Bruce fans in the crowd—and there were apparently quite a few—realized that they were in for a major treat.

"Usually, I'd say that John Leventhal will be playing the part of Bruce Springsteen; tonight, Bruce Springsteen will be played by Bruce Springsteen."

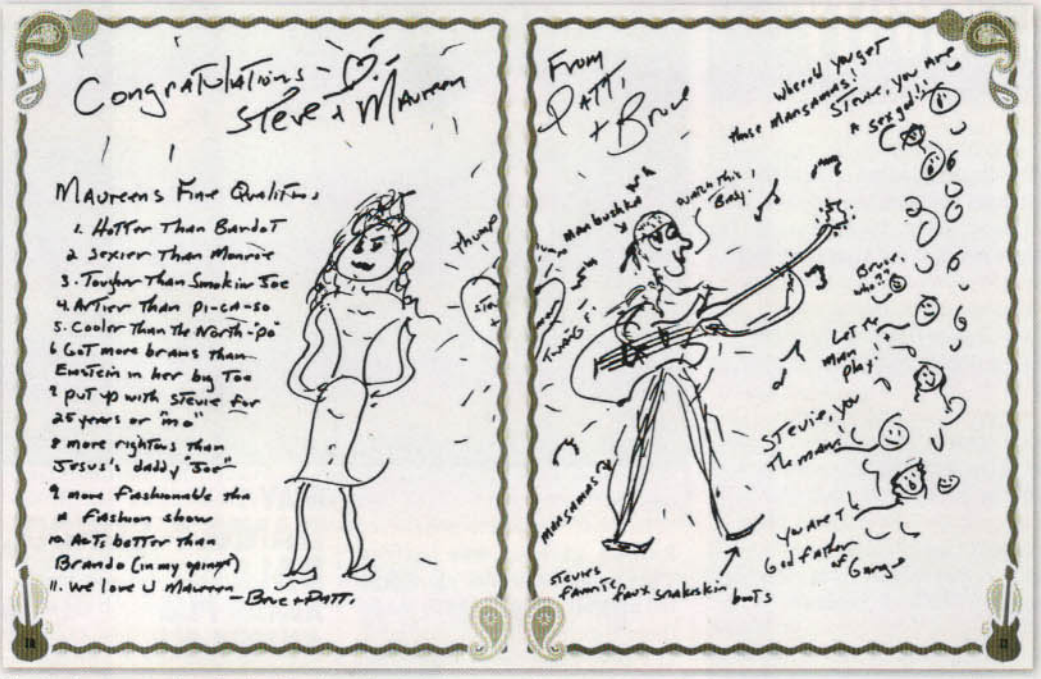
With those words, the Boss himself—decked out in cargo pants and sporting a fresh, tight haircut—appeared from stage left to the familiar cries of *"Broooce!"* from the crowd. The performers went right into a riveting reprise of their Grammy-nominated duet from *The List*, highlighted by their yearning harmony vocals on the chorus. While the shell-shocked crowd responded with a standing ovation, Cash thanked Bruce for being a "gentleman" and for showing up on such short notice. He was gone just as quickly, leaving many in the far-from-Jersey crowd wondering, "Did that really just happen?"

—John Howie, Jr.

APRIL 24
A NIGHT TO REMEMBER
TRIBECA GRILL
NEW YORK, NY
With The Rascals and Steven Van Zandt

What's amazed me most in the weeks since the Rascals reunited to play at A Night to Remember, our annual benefit for the Kristen Ann Carr Fund, has been the number of people who responded to the news with, "They were *such* an important band to me," and talked of how the group's music affected their lives.

This was true of all sorts of people who crammed Tribeca Grill to see the Rascals play an hour set—15 songs—on a jury-rigged stage in a low-ceiling room never intended for any kind of performance, let alone one by the world's original rock 'n' soul band.


Congratulations - Steve & Maureen
Maureens Fine Qualities
1. Hotter Than Bardot
2. Sexier Than Monroe
3. Tougher Than Smokin Joe
4. Artier Than Picasso
5. Cooler Than the North Pole
6. Got more brains than Einstein in her big Toe
7. put up with Stevie for 25 years or "more"
8. more rights than Jesus's daddy "Joe"
9. more fashionable than a Fashion show
10. Acts better than Brando (in my opinion)
11. We love U Maureen
- Bruce & Patti.
From Patti + Bruce
Where'd you get those mansannas? Stevie, you are a sexy gal!
Stevie, you the mans
You are the God father of Garage
Stevie's pants: fake snakeskin boots

The Springsteens salute the Van Zandts, this year's honorees, in the A Night to Remember program booklet.

It was true of people who weren't there. Patrice O'Neill of Not in Our Town (niot.org) seemed somewhere between ecstasy when she heard they'd played and tears when she found out she'd missed it. Greg Johnson of the Blue Door in Oklahoma City (bluedoorokc.com), a singer-songwriter man par excellence, told me very seriously that the Rascals were one of the most important groups he'd heard coming up, that they represented to him all that was good and beautiful about the music. So did a couple of other members of the board of the Folk Alliance International.

Among those who were there, nobody could lay claim to greater Rascals love, respect and influence than Bruce Springsteen and Little Stevie Van Zandt (who, together, guested on "**Good Lovin'**"). The influence of the Rascals in putting together a synthesis of a rock band centered on soul music is a clearer single model for what the E Street Band (and Stevie's various groups) have tried to do than the Beatles, Dylan, Spector, or even the Rolling Stones. In particular, Eddie Brigati's frantic soul man scattering energy all over the joint anticipated Bruce's stage persona, but Gene Cornish's guitar playing weighed heavily on Stevie in particular; Dino Danelli's powerhouse drumming helped make Max mighty; and Felix Cavaliere's use of the Hammond B3 is one of the most direct ancestors of Danny Federici's unique and soulful style. The Rascals, far more than any of the West Coast or East Coast hipster bands—or, for that matter, the British ones—solidified the idea of being a group that made hit singles and yet always had the courage to stand up for what was right. Not only in their songs and albums ("People Got to Be Free," *Time Peace, Freedom Suite)* but in the things they did: refusing to play in South Africa before that was necessarily fashionable; insisting on black opening acts; consistent opposition to the war in Vietnam.

In the day, the Rascals were the most political of all rock bands. The rock & soul approach they used both celebrated freedom and rejected lies. They consistently supported both the civil rights and antiwar movements—and despite what you've been told, that was a very risky thing to do. (There are no white artists who did more.) The only reason I can think of that they didn't get banned is that the music was too damn good and their approach so straightforward: What were the authorities going to do, jump up and declare that people *don't* got to be free?

I took a long drive that Saturday morning before the benefit and just listened to Rascals records, particularly *Freedom Suite*. I'd claim I know those songs down to my DNA, and that's unquestionably true of "People Got to Be Free" and their reshaped "America the Beautiful" (which blows away all pretenses that it is, yet).

But that day, one of the brightest we had all spring, the song that snatched me was "Look Around." "Bigotry and hate and fear got 10 million votes this year," Felix sings at the top of the first verse, and the teenage harmonies dissolve into sirens and gunfire. They won't let you go—more than any other record I can think of, that song rubs your face in reality. They're singing about those things to reject them. The real message is "We've all got something that's deep down inside us / Love's not a dirty word / That's just the way it's heard."

I can remember when ideas like that could get you into a lot of trouble. Actually, that might be five minutes ago. We're all tougher now, sterner, more committed to whatever it is we're committed to—which isn't a vision of freedom and beauty but of the cult of individualism steamrollering common humanity and a celebration of greed poisoning the nation and the planet (and poisoning is not a metaphor). We don't often recapture our sense of our own greater potentials. But when the Rascals' music appears—in whatever form—the sun shines a little bit brighter, brotherhood becomes a reality, faith in the power of ordinary people to change the world is reborn. We—or at least, I—live anew in a land of hope and dreams. All because they make us look around, see what's there, see what could be.

The Rascals didn't play "Look Around," and they didn't need to. They played "Come On Up," "It's a Beautiful Morning," "I Ain't Gonna Eat Out My Heart Anymore" and "It's Wonderful," and the truth of that message—"Love is a Beautiful Thing"—shone from their faces and ours. They played like they'd been apart maybe a few months, not almost four decades. They played like they were brothers, some cranky, some overjoyed, all wrapped inside the music. I watch people 25 and 30 years old live out Steve's vision, which is that this music has an appeal that, if not eternal, still has the power to inspire a lot more than just good times.

One of the purposes of A Night to Remember, the reason we run it as a party instead of a formal dinner, is to have fun. Just that. Enjoy yourself. Be a little more alive. My daughter Kristen was about life, not death—she was so extreme on the matter, she refused to discuss her own.

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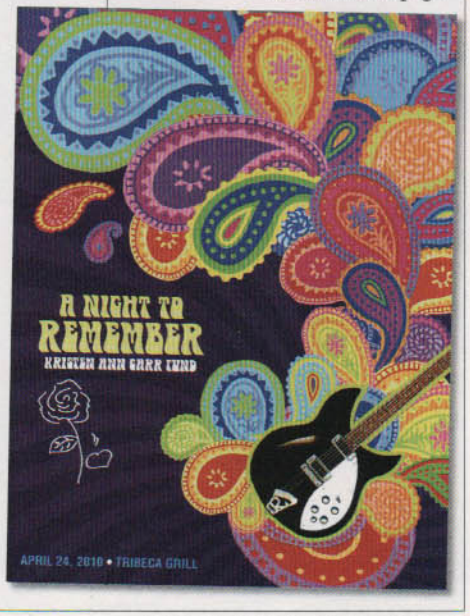


'SMALL BUT MIGHTY'

Springsteen inducts DeVito

Danny inducted me, so I'm out here to pay him back. It's my pleasure. Edison, Einstein, Aldrin, Fitzgerald, Abbot & Costello, myself... these are a few of the names that have preceded our next honoree into the New Jersey Hall of Fame. But no one inducted to this point physically and temperamentally personifies our state more than Danny DeVito. He is the human essence of New Jersey in a small, powerful package. We are small, but mighty; he is small, but mighty. We are dense; he is dense. We have attitudes. You've seen Danny in any of his roles, on TV or in the movies, he has Jersey attitude pouring out of him even when he's standing still.

He has given voice and humanity to characters who are vindictive, nasty, vengeful, greedy, sexually depraved—maybe that's just me. Cynical. Corrupt. The underdog. And we all find a little bit of ourselves somewhere in there. Whether we like it or not, these *are* the qualities that folks across the nation often associate with our beloved state. Now, I know our license [plate] bears the sobriquet of Garden State. But no one really believes that. Nobody actually buys that bullshit. *What* garden? Where is it? What people actually know us as is The Fuck You State. That's what should be on the license plate!

Now, I know a wonderful hall of fame here has been created with great intentions to counteract that image... but it's just not going to happen. It's not possible! If next year the cure for cancer, the solution to global warming, and the end to world conflict were produced in Hackensack, Connecticut would take the credit. So, we're all here tonight sort of engaged in this very inspiring, wonderful, heartbreak, noble exercise in futility. But that's what makes New Jersey so great. They go full speed ahead into it, they let the state bird fly [raises middle fingers]...

My friend Danny DeVito is a *movie star*. We are the least expected, and the least expected of. Like Danny, we come out of the blue, from nowhere, we bring our game, we steal the gold ring from the merry-go-round. Danny stole the gold ring, and he stole our hearts with it. Toughness, work, heart, inventiveness, incredible act of self-imagination, and Jersey soul, soul, soul: Danny's persona, his life, and his work exemplify what it means to be one of us, a New Jerseyan. And I'm proud to induct my great friend into the New Jersey Hall of Fame tonight.

Springsteen with Rusty Paul and Sid Bernstein, May 2, 2010.

continued from page 13

In that respect, what the Rascals gave us was perfect. They've all been nice enough to tell me that she was what brought them together. But for that hour, in a lot of ways, they conjured her spirit. So when I was 16 and when I was 60, they gave me that enormous gift of life and love. You may expect a greater thing out of music, or culture, or... anything. I don't know where you'd get it.

The show was broadcast on SiriusXM, on both the Underground Garage and E Street channels. Steve and I spent the whole next week interviewing the band for a special that was broadcast, along with the concert, on Memorial Day weekend. They were some of the most intriguing interviews I've done in a long time—in fact, when I heard them in edited form, I decided they're one of the pinnacles of my career in music journalism, written or broadcast. Every one of the band retains a sense of pride, not only in their brilliant rock & soul (that's what they call it) but also in being a band that stood for something.

Stevie is now managing the Rascals, so look for more from them—though whether it will be new shows, new songs, new recordings or something else is anyone's guess. This, however, is certain: As every ugly thing that the '60s had supposedly laid to rest rises once again, my thought has been basically say to hell with any politician, particularly a President, who thinks we went too far. The Rascals offer a better solution: Fight, through whatever you do, to make justice, equality, and peace a permanent reality.

And you can dance to it.

—Dave Marsh

MAY 1
RANNEY SCHOOL BALL
ADDISON PARK
ABERDEEN, NJ

With Tim McLoone and the Shirleys

For the annual Ranney School Ball, Springsteen donated an autographed Telecaster for the night's benefit auction. Attending with his mother, Springsteen added some extra value to that guitar by playing two songs on it with the evening's house band, **"Money (That's What I Want)"** and **"634-5789."**

MAY 2
NJ HALL OF FAME
NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
NEWARK, NJ

With Danny DeVito

The annual NJ Hall of Fame induction has become the event to attend in the state the first Sunday in May. For the last three years, the best New Jersey has to offer has come out to celebrate the great Garden State, and when you think of the best... well, Bruce Springsteen is always high on that list.

When Springsteen was slated for induction in 2008, in the Hall of Fame's inaugural class, it was anyone's guess whether he'd actually attend. So when he appeared during a most dramatic opening, the crowd went wild.

For this year's event, the Hall's third annual induction ceremony, the New Jersey Performing Arts Center was filled with a lot of heavyweights—Danny

GARY GELLMAN PHOTOS

DeVito, Susan Sarandon, Jack Nicholson, Olympian Carl Lewis, Buzz Aldrin, Yogi Berra, Candice Bergen, Cake Boss Buddy Valastro, legendary promoter Sid Bernstein, Joe Pesci, Joe Piscopo and Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito—so you knew it was going to be a night to remember.

Bruce brought the house down once again to present Danny DeVito with his award, and it was done in true Springsteen style. Among all the famous personalities that were there, only Bruce could humble all the legends in the room when he entered.

I first saw Bruce attempting to get to his dressing room, passing the likes of Berra and Piscopo, all wanting to say hello and take pictures. Then, as I was backstage capturing images of the Governor, I overheard one of the Hall of Fame Staffers: "Where's Sid? Bruce would like to meet Sid Bernstein." Soon, Bruce himself was backstage looking for Bernstein, the man who brought The Beatles to America.

Sid appeared thrilled to meet Bruce, and the first thing Sid said was, "You are my hero." They spent about five minutes together before the staffers swept Bruce away to prepare for his appearance. Sid told me later on our TV show that because of Springsteen's fight to stop ticket gouging at concerts, he had gained a lot of respect for Bruce and thought he was a great musician.

As they did in 2008, when DeVito did the honors for Springsteen's own induction, Bruce and Danny performed another memorable rendition of **"Glory Days"** and brought over 40 people on stage with them. Those are truly two events in my professional life that will be very difficult to trump.

—*Gary Gellman*

Gary Gellman is the official photographer for the New Jersey Hall of Fame (to see more images of the event, visit www.njhalloffame.com) and the host of celebrity TV talk show Let's Talk with Gary Gellman *that can be seen in the northeast on Verizon's FiOS 1 Network and worldwide at www.gellman.tv.*

MAY 6
WAMFEST 2010
FAIRLEIGH DICKINSON UNIVERSITY
MADISON, NJ

With Robert Pinsky and John Wesley Harding

The 2010 Words and Music Festival hosted a one-of-a-kind appearance from Springsteen, who joined a three-term Poet Laureate and an old friend for "Jersey Rain: Robert Pinsky and Bruce Springsteen in Conversation and Performance with John Wesley Harding." The event was limited to students only, with about 400 packing the Dreyfuss Theater. Moderator Wes Stace (A.K.A. singer-songwriter Harding) is the Artist-in-Residence for WAMfest, as well as one of the very few artists to open for Springsteen in the last 30 years. Bringing Springsteen and Pinsky together, two New Jerseyans with a great deal more in common, resulted in a fascinating two-hour session of music and poetry. Said Bruce, "We could get some co-writing going, I'm telling you, man!"

Harding reports the setlist (not including the conversation): **"Samurai Song"** (read by Bruce, accompanying himself on guitar, segueing into...) **"Darkness on the Edge of Town"** (sung by Bruce); **"Shirt"** (read by Robert, accompanied by Bruce on guitar and harmonica, segueing into...) **"The River "** (sung by Bruce); **"Explanations"** (read by Bruce, accompanying himself on guitar, segueing into...) **"Born to Run"** (sung by Bruce); **"Antique"** (read by Robert, accompanied by Wes and Bruce on guitar); **"Jersey Rain"** (read by Robert and Bruce, accompanied by Bruce on guitar, segueing into...) **"The Promised Land"** (sung by Bruce, with backing vocals by Wes and Robert); **"The Want Bone"** (read by Robert, accompanied by Wes and Bruce on guitar); **"Lines"** (read by Bruce, accompanying himself on guitar, segueing into...) **"Nebraska"** (sung by Bruce); **"Wreck on the Highway"** (sung by Wes and Bruce).

Many other poems or fragments of poems were read or recited (Walter Savage Landor by Robert, for example) but these were the main performances in order *[see sidebar next page for Harding's full report]*.

MAY 13
RAINFOREST FOUNDATION BENEFIT
CARNEGIE HALL
NEW YORK, NY

With Sting, Lady Gaga, Elton John, Shirley Bassey, Debbie Harry, and others

"What do you say, my friends?" Sting asked the Carnegie Hall audience, a twinkle in his eye. "Shall we bring the house down?" The crowd roared in the affirmative, and Bruce Springsteen was revealed as the "Unannounced Special Guest" at Sting and Trudie Styler's annual Rainforest Foundation benefit. It was appropriate payback for December's Kennedy Center Honors, at which Sting gave a gracious performance of "The Rising."

Springsteen came onstage singing **"Dancing in the Dark,"** paused to give Sting a quick embrace, and then struck off on a radically recast version—and thank God for that. Even though it was the highest-charting *Born in the U.S.A.* single (going all the way to No. 2), the original synth-pop arrangement of "Dancing in the Dark" has aged poorly. This 2010 model, more akin to what Bruce has been doing with the E Street Band of late, was a vast improvement, substituting cojones and drive for the tinny chug-chug of the 1984 original.

Springsteen's end-of-show star turn provided a fitting finale for a show that had already featured plenty of notable and unexpected moments from its all-star cast. Lady Gaga looked surprisingly prim and proper as she sat at the piano for a straight-up rendition of Ben E. King's "Stand By Me." Dame Shirley Bassey, the "James Bond" soundtrack diva who still looks great and sounds spry at age 73, checked in with "Goldfinger," "Diamonds Are Forever" and "Big Spender." Sting turned Fine Young Cannibals' "She Drives Me Crazy" into an opportunity to dance with his wife. And speaking of choreographic romance, Elton John served up Madonna's "Material Girl" and "Like a Virgin" while surrounded by scantily clad male dancers.

But it was still Springsteen who made the biggest impression, in keeping with the show's announced theme of songs from the 1980s.

"I'm the hired gun for the evening," Springsteen announced onstage. "Sting told me we're

Goin' Gaga, May 13, 2010.

BRIAN LATTMAN PHOTO

'WAM' BAM THANK YOU, BRUCE!

John Wesley Harding's Minutes & Minutiae from WAMfest, May 6, 2010

It was an amazing week of "Words and Music" (WAMfest) events at Fairleigh Dickinson. On Monday, John Doe and Exene Cervenka of X played and talked; on Tuesday, Eugene Mirman, Michael Showalter, Leo Allen, and Kumail Nanjiani performed comedy and then answered questions; on Wednesday, Paul Muldoon and I discussed the difference (and similarities) between lyrics and poems with reference to our collaboration; and on Thursday, in what can only be discussed in the "dream come true" category, two poet laureates (one official, one unofficial) Robert Pinsky and Bruce Springsteen, discussed words, music, New Jersey, getting old, being public figures, and everything else under the sun, not to mention the fact that they also played, sang, read and recited. All houses were packed, all audiences happy. And, most importantly, artists and musicians discussed their work for students who themselves are would-be writers and artists.

By Thursday mid-morning, I'd planned my questions (mostly in my hotel room that morning, when I read a bunch of Robert's fascinating essays from Slate.com and found some amazing quotations that linked Bruce and Robert—which, after all, was the reason we'd pursued the pairing in the first place: finding out they were born in the same hospital ten years apart was quite surreal). But I could never have planned what actually happened, and if I'd tried, it wouldn't have been half so good.

The magic began in the dressing room, when the three of us gathered and did soundcheck (we ran through "Wreck on the Highway" once). We went through the rough order of events. There had been various practical debates about whether songs should be sung seated or standing, etc., but once we started talking, everything became very straightforward. I was going to offer them some of the questions so they felt comfortable, but this was hardly required.

I knew that Bruce had agreed to the event because he knew and respected Pinsky's poetry—we'd talked about Pinsky's poem "Jersey Rain"—and because it was going to be fun. He turned up with two annotated copies of Pinsky's verse and made the wonderful suggestion that he might read certain of Pinsky's poems, accompanying himself on the guitar, before he segued into songs of his own that he felt related to them. Once that masterstroke was incorporated into the master plan, the setlist pretty much fell into place. I'd asked Bruce to play a couple of songs, but when it looked like he was going to give us "Darkness on the Edge of Town," "The River," "Born to Run," "The Promised Land," "Nebraska," and a quick duet of "Wreck on the Highway" (a reprise of our duet from McCabe's, 6/18/94, which made it onto the reissue of my album *Awake*), it suddenly looked like the perfect Springsteen six-song set.

Meanwhile, Robert asked us to play behind him as he read his poems "Antique" and "The Want Bone," and we ran these improvisations a couple of times backstage. I don't do solos (you may have noticed), but luckily I had Bruce around to do the frilly bits—a quicker 12-bar in G, and a slower one in E: it was mathematically interesting to get them to end simultaneously with Robert's recitations. Bruce and Robert also spontaneously decided to recite the second half of "Jersey Rain" together, syllable for syllable:

The Jersey rain, my rain, soaks all as one:
It smites Metuchen, Rahway, Saddle River,
Fair Haven, Newark, Little Silver, Bayonne.
I feel it churning even in fair weather

To craze distinction, dry the same as wet.
In ripples of heat the August drought still feeds
Vapors in the sky that swell to smite the state —
The Jersey rain, my rain, in streams and beads

Of indissoluble grudge and aspiration:
Original milk, replenisher of grief,
Descending destroyer, arrowed source of passion,
Silver and black, executioner, font of life."

By the time we were at the side of the stage, as David Daniel (head of WAMfest, who first had the inspired idea of pairing these two "poet laureates") did his introduction, it was like Bruce and Robert were old friends. And one of the chief joys was the growing realization during the next two hours that this event, from the moment of its initial conception, was just meant to be: such are the correspondences between the two artists, their oeuvres, their backgrounds and their missions.

As ever, Bruce bowled me over with his enthusiasm and determination to do the best show possible, even leading an E Street Band-like "prayer huddle" before we went onstage. ("Can I get an Amen?") And once we were on, it was plain sailing for a very exciting, very funny, never awkward and occasionally moving two hours.

(Tears came to my eyes during "The River," more or less the first Springsteen song I ever heard, when it suddenly hit me that one of my very greatest heroes was sitting a foot to my right singing the shit out of my favorite song. It was, in particular, the unearthly falsetto moan at the end, just after we'd been talking about Pavarotti. Then I decided that I should really pull myself together. I also got a tension headache from concentrating too hard on my guests' answers—which, once I had diagnosed, I was able to rid myself of simply by relaxing my shoulders.)

It was all very smooth, including a little Q&A with the audience: "When have the two of you ever been star-struck?

Pinsky: "I'm never star-struck."

Springsteen: "I once met a Beatle."

My first question was this: "You were born in the same hospital, ten years apart. Here's a quote: 'I grew up in a small town, but the town, Long Branch, NJ, was also very near New York, and a lot of New York people came to the town on vacation. It was a resort, there was a boardwalk, there was a merry-go-round. All of that was beautiful.' Which one of you said that?"

In fact, they weren't quite certain who had said it, which was the point of the whole event in the first place. Many wonderful things were discussed, and I'm sure a transcript will emerge at some point.

This was an amazing culmination to the 2010 Words and Music Festival: great artists, poets, songwriters, doing what they do best. We should do the show again somewhere, and perhaps we will.

My great thanks to the very wonderful Robert Pinsky and the very wonderful Bruce Springsteen. Also to David Daniel, who reached out to Pinsky; and WAMfest, for giving me the job of Artist-in-Residence and the chance to curate this festival.

WAMfest will return in 2011. We may not be able to top yesterday. (My suggestion was Bob Dylan and T.S.Eliot.)

Reprinted with permission. Visit John Wesley Harding's blog at <blogs.myspace.com/wesleystace>.

The poets down here... Springsteen and Pinsky preparing backstage, snapped by Harding.

doing a show of '80s nostalgia. I said, 'That's easy! We're both '80s nostalgia!'" And so he brought it—and he didn't stop with his own catalog.

After "Dancing in the Dark," Springsteen worked a marvelous bit of alchemy with Bryan Adams' lightweight 1983 hit **"Cuts Like a Knife,"** done up the way Otis Redding might have back in the day. "There's a soul song waitin' inside this song," Springsteen insisted, and then he proceeded to prove it with a house-shaking version that included the inevitable mid-song spoken-word testimonial spiel. About three minutes in, he started a-preachin'—"Has anybody out there ever been... *heartbroken?*"—recounting how he'd been jilted by some long-ago girlfriend, complete with a well-placed "Heard It Through the Grapevine" quote.

That was plenty cool, but the surprises still weren't over. The finale was Journey's **"Don't Stop Believin'"**—Springsteen's idea, apparently—with all hands (including Elton John's boy-toy eye candy) back on deck for a sing-along version. And yes, Springsteen gave Lady Gaga a hug afterward. C'mon, you would have, too.

—David Menconi

MAY 22
GATEWAY SCHOOL BENEFIT
NOKIA THEATRE
NEW YORK, NY

Sharing the bill with Jon Stewart

Matt and Lucy Damon and Robert Grace Hightower DeNiro hosted this benefit concert for the Gateway School, a school for learning disabled children that helps them excel both academically and socially. Although the program listed Jon Stewart performing after Bruce, Jon took the stage first, proclaiming "even I would leave after Bruce performed." After Jon's own very funny routine, he gushingly brought Bruce to the stage, referring to him as a "better man than performer." In fact, he complimented the entire Springsteen clan as so lovely that he wished they were able to breed by spores.

Bruce then took the stage and started off by lightheartedly giving his own post-introduction of Jon Stewart, a moment he had clearly been waiting for. He joked that Jon was the bastard child of Walter Cronkite and Jerry Lewis abandoned at exit 7A on the NJTP, a clear homage to Jon's own introduction of Bruce at the Kennedy Center Honors late last year. Then Bruce got down to business, picked up his guitar and started **"Adam Raised a Cain."** Next came a warm version of **"Bobby Jean"** followed by **"The Promised Land."**

The next song took Bruce to the piano. Introducing **"For You,"** Bruce brought back the intro he had used on the Devils & Dust tour about how all how all great rock 'n' roll songs could be ended with the words "and please pull your pants down." Bruce dedicated the song to Patti with the wish that she would pull her pants down when they got home that night.

Bruce then went back to the front of the stage with his guitar, declaring "Let's rock 'n' roll!" as he went into **"Working on the Highway."** The crowd remained a little subdued, so he livened them up a bit with the admonishment to "come on, ya stiffs!"

Bruce then headed back to the piano and was joined by wife Patti for perhaps the highlight of the evening, a duet of **"If I Should Fall Behind"** as requested by son, Sam. Bruce and Patti ended the night with another duet on **"Thunder Road,"** a lovely version with Springsteen—still at the piano—having a good chuckle with the line "I got this guitar...."

Jon Stewart came back out at the end to thank Bruce and Patti, with the assurance that he did indeed pull his pants down during Bruce's set. Overall, a seven-song set played in good spirits and company for a great cause.

—Christy Osoling

With Alejandro Escovedo and the Sensitive Boys, July 23, 2010.

JULY 23
ALWAYS A FRIEND
THE STONE PONY
ASBURY PARK, NJ

With Alejandro Escovedo

On a muggy night when most sane people stayed in the air-conditioned cool, a late-arriving crowd filled the Stone Pony to catch Alejandro Escovedo with his newly named band the Sensitive Boys. Escovedo dutifully performed an energetic one-and-a-half-hour set that was front-loaded with material from his new CD *Street Songs of Love* and the previous CD, *Real Animal*. But it was about to get hotter when his band returned for the encore with an extra mic stand and a carefully placed lyric sheet on the monitor in front.

Sure enough, there was Bruce Springsteen, wearing baggy blue jeans, a navy blue collared shirt, and brown work boots, hopping up on stage. Few in the crowd had seen him or even thought he was there, so there had been none of the usual "Brooocing" to drown out Escovedo's band.

Alejandro said, "As you guys well know, this man is a very gracious gentleman. He was kind enough to have me play with him, one of my songs, in front of 18,000 people in Houston. It changed my life, pretty much. So we're gonna do the song we did that night."

Springsteen beamed as he took his place at the extra mic with a white Gibson-style guitar, and soon the whole place was dancing and clapping along to **"Always a Friend."** It was a shorter version than the one played in Houston, but no less intense, with Bruce and Alejandro singing together on the chorus.

The next song wasn't a surprise: "This one's from the new record, it's called **'Faith.'"** Sweat was starting to pour off everyone—except Alejandro, who seemed strangely unaffected by the intense heat. He and Bruce exhorted the crowd to sing along on the chorus, "you gotta have faith," and Bruce also sang a verse on his own. By this time, Bruce's shirt was completely soaked, and with all the sweat rolling down he had to keep wiping his guitar down with a towel.

One final song was the Rolling Stones' **"Beast of Burden."** A great moment, this song really stretched out, with the crowd shouting back the chorus and Bruce taking a couple of great solos. He played a lot to Alejandro's drummer, Hector Munoz. But perhaps the best part of the lengthy jam was seeing Bruce and Al trading warm smiles like they were sitting in someone's living room, drinking a beer. It was a kind gesture to a fellow troubadour who has finally gotten not just the critical but the popular acclaim he so richly deserves.

—Lisa Iannucci

JOHN CAVANAUGH PHOTO

COURTESY OF SHARON LAVOY

THE BOOKS

And you can dance to it!

Political Boss

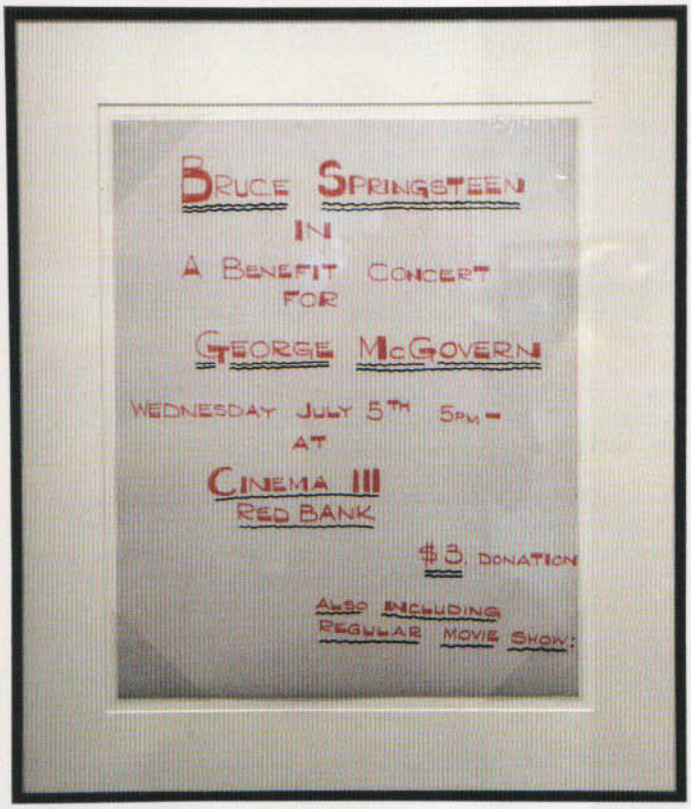
WORKING ON A DREAM: THE PROGRESSIVE POLITICAL VISION OF BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN
By David Masciotra
266pp., Continuum Books, softcover

By Shawn Poole

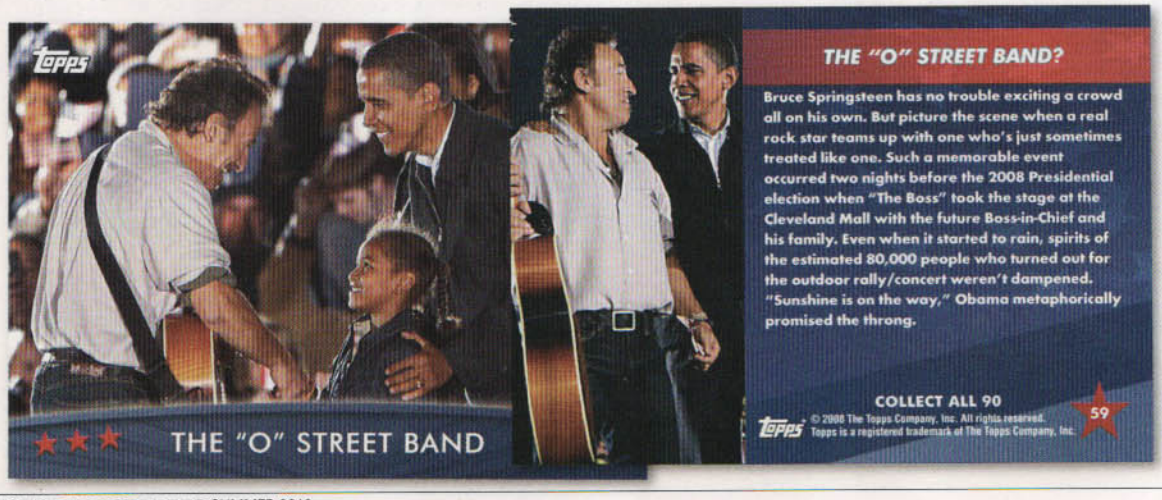
To his credit, author David Masciotra lets you know up front exactly where he's coming from and where he's going with this very interesting book. Discovering the music of Bruce Springsteen as a teenager, Masciotra asserts in his introduction, "catalyzed my political awakening, philosophical development, and commitment to understanding what it means to be an American, and what it means to be human. In the years since I discovered Springsteen, I have gone to plenty of diverse sources to deepen my understanding... but it all started with a screen door slamming on the streets of a runaway American dream."

Masciotra reveals his leftist political viewpoint early and goes on to state that he wrote the book for a few basic reasons. One is to argue how Springsteen's work can offer to others the "danceable education" (a term he attributes to writer Cornel West) that it offered to him, a launching-pad for "exploration of topics and subjects pivotal to social justice." Another is to encourage activists on the left to draw inspiration from Springsteen's work, both by gaining renewed commitment, hope and energy from hearing Bruce's songs, as well as by learning from his often plain-spoken songwriting style how better to popularize progressive politics among more citizens. Masciotra also sets one more goal for his book that is a goal shared by many Springsteen fans, whether we write about him or not, which is simply to encourage all people who haven't done so already to check out Bruce's music and what it has to offer in general.

As someone whose leftist politics have been shaped substantially by my own encounters with Springsteen's art since my own adolescence, I was particularly interested in seeing how successfully Masciotra would meet these goals. For the most part, he does well. Each chapter covers a different set of political issues, offering a general leftist analysis of these issues, then weaving in a variety of Springsteen songs that have addressed these same issues and analyzing them in the context of both the issues and other works of art to which they bear some relation. In the process, a basic political vision does emerge from Springsteen's work—one that may neither completely mirror the artist's own personal politics nor be the only vision that can be drawn from his work, but a powerful one that is there to be found nonetheless.



Not surprisingly with a book of this type, even a reader like me, who shares much of Masciotra's politics, will find at least a few things with which to disagree. For example, I think the book is more than a bit too hopeful about the positive impact of President Obama's election and more than a bit too dismissive of some of Springsteen's more "mainstream" moves like playing the Super Bowl. That's okay, though, because no matter what your own politics may be, Masciotra will make you think more deeply about the political aspect of Bruce Springsteen's music and what it means to many of his fans.


Topps
THE "O" STREET BAND
THE "O" STREET BAND?
Bruce Springsteen has no trouble exciting a crowd all on his own. But picture the scene when a real rock star teams up with one who's just sometimes treated like one. Such a memorable event occurred two nights before the 2008 Presidential election when "The Boss" took the stage at the Cleveland Mall with the future Boss-in-Chief and his family. Even when it started to rain, spirits of the estimated 80,000 people who turned out for the outdoor rally/concert weren't dampened. "Sunshine is on the way," Obama metaphorically promised the throng.
COLLECT ALL 90
59
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Left: *Springsteen makes it onto a Topps card, #59 of the company's President Obama Collector Trading Cards series issued in 2009. The card (front and back shown) highlights Bruce's appearance with Obama at a Cleveland rally.*

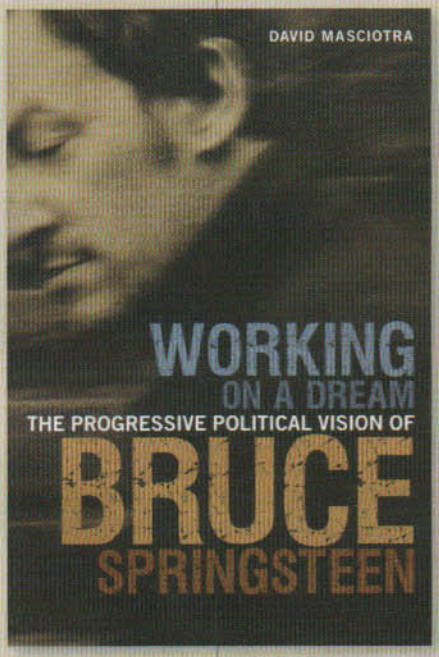
Above: *A poster advertising Springsteen's 1972 benefit for Democratic presidential nominee George McGovern, currently on display at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.*

THE ART OF TRANSFORMATION

David Masciotra on Springsteen and Seeger at the Lincoln Memorial

"We Are One," a concert celebrating the inauguration of Barack Obama, was held at the foot of the Lincoln Memorial. Springsteen opened the show with a straightforward acoustic version of "The Rising" and before he would take the stage again, acts as diverse as Will.I.Am, John Mellencamp and Garth Brooks would perform for the thousands gathered in the nation's capital, among them President Obama himself.

Just before the closing number, Springsteen reemerged onto the stage, this time accompanied by Pete Seeger, the 90-year-old folk music legend, and Tao Seeger, Pete's grandson. Springsteen stepped up to the microphone and with a wide smile said, "Lead us, Pete." This prompted the living monument to musical and activist history to give out his own instructions: "You sing it with us."



The three troubadours, each representing a different generation, then began Woody Guthrie's classic tribute to democracy and solidarity, "This Land is Your Land" by strumming their guitars and lifting their voices, surrounded by a multicolored, multicultural and multi-aged choir. After the first two verses, which are familiar to most Americans, Pete Seeger strongly spoke the two formerly "lost" verses, and Springsteen shouted each line in urgent and impassioned repetition:

In the squares of the city, in the shadow of a steeple
By the relief office, I'd seen my people
As they stood there hungry, I stood there asking
Is this land made for you and me?
As I went walking I saw a sign there
And on the sign it said "No Trespassing"
But on the other side it didn't say nothing,
That side was made for you and me.

The call and response between Seeger and Springsteen, with audible audience participation, represented Springsteen at his populist and prophetic best. Pete Seeger was there with his voice and guitar and his sweat and tears when black men were shot with firehoses. He was there to amplify his voice and swing his arms to hold back the blood flowing from Southeast Asia. He was there when Martin Luther King stood at the same steps of the same memorial and invited the world to share his dream. Springsteen's invitation for Pete Seeger to join in a celebratory moment of American triumph against the forces of hate, violence and injustice that he had dedicated his life to opposing was a beautiful illustration of reverence for history, regard for heroes and reaffirmation of a progressive political vision that is larger than any single moment and any symbol of power, even the one who was being honored.

Instead of simply applauding the President-elect whom he campaigned for, Springsteen seized the opportunity to realign himself with the suffering and transform the stage and event into something bigger than an Obama celebration. By shifting the spotlight onto Pete Seeger, who so poetically led his grandson and Springsteen in the recitation of Guthrie's radical commitment to freedom and justice, Springsteen created a moment that was instructional of the struggle. The struggle for equality and dignity has a long history, and it does not end with the election of Barack Obama, even if he symbolizes hope and promise. It is wrapped up in the idea of comfort for the suffering and opportunity for the ordinary. Pete Seeger tirelessly devoted himself to telling that story, and Springsteen allowed him to tell it once more in front of the largest audience in his career, and for the would-be leader of the free world. Seeger and Springsteen did not hesitate to make Obama an audience member and instead of singing for him, sang to him. This was done in a reminder that the poor and dispossessed must never be forgotten, and that wealth cannot be acquiesced to and substituted for competence and fairness when determining the direction of public policy. It solidified Springsteen's status as a visionary artist who may support certain politicians but remains most loyal to undying principles.

It also dramatized his ability to transform the stage into something of his unique creation. Just as he creates a dance hall, circus or spiritual meeting in the middle of a basketball arena, he too can reorient the celebration of one man's election to the presidency into a rally for an entire nation's progress and promise. This is the art of transformation and the creation of transcendence.

This is Springsteen's greatest gift as a performer.

Excerpted from the 2010 book Working on a Dream: The Progressive Political Vision of Bruce Springsteen *by David Masciotra (paperback / $21.95). Reprinted with permission of Continuum Books.*

E Street Radio's Community Conference on Bruce Springsteen and Politics

Six Springsteen fans walk into a broadcast studio.... That may sound like the set-up for a joke, but actually the Springsteen Community Conference has turned into one of the more serious-minded and interesting programs on E Street Radio, the all-Springsteen satellite radio channel (Sirius 10/XM 58). Each month, a small group of major Bruce fans gathers for an in-depth discussion on a topic of interest to the fan community. Past topics have included the *Born in the U.S.A.* period and Springsteen in the '90s.

In May, the Community Conference was all about Bruce and politics. The participants, representing a range of political backgrounds and viewpoints, were John Franck of E1 Music; Stan Goldstein, author of *Rock & Roll Tour of the Jersey Shore* and the Springsteen Blog at nj.com; *Backstreets*' own Lisa Iannucci; critic/biographer/radio commentator Dave Marsh; and Jovan Mrvos, formerly of Columbia Records. Ben Lazar, music writer and former A&R rep, was the moderator.

The discussion centered around Springsteen's political evolution over the years and the various responses it has produced among his diverse audience. While much of what passes for political debate on the radio these days consists of little more than shouting matches, this discussion was a true exchange of ideas. Springsteen fans with various political opinions will find this program to be informative, enlightening and even downright moving in some parts.

If you aren't a satellite radio subscriber or just missed the show, you still can download and listen to the entire Springsteen Community Conference in mp3 format. For details on how to do this, visit Ben Lazar's excellent blog, "A Deeper Shade of Soul," at www.adeepershadeofsoul.blogspot.com

—Shawn Poole

IN MEMORIAM

July 18, 1946 - April 16, 2010

Delores "Dee" Holmes

By Maggie Powell

The news that announced the passing of Delores Holmes on April 16, 2010 was met with great sadness, not only from those closest and dearest to Delores, but also from the New Jersey music scene. Its roll of honor had just lost another mainstay performer.

Delores ("Miss Dee") Holmes was certainly well known for her stint as backing vocalist for the Bruce Springsteen Band. But during her long musical career, she shared stages in venues like New York City's famous Beacon Theatre along with other artists of notable standing, including Phoebe Snow and the internationally acclaimed Beth Nielsen Chapman.

In addition, Holmes performed with just about every artist who ever played the Jersey Shore; in recent years, these performances included appearances at Bobby Bandiera's "HOPE" concert as well as his hugely successful Rock and Soul Revue shows (clips of which are accessible on YouTube). Bobby tells *Backstreets*, "Delores always rose to the occasion whatever it was. She was always willing to contribute for any benefit being held, for ALS, Holiday Express, and many others.

"She was kind, thoughtful, and most of all, a great singer. She also adored her daughter Layonne—a great singer, too—and never hesitated to put her first." Bandiera continues. "She and her smile will be missed, especially at the Jersey Shore."

At left, Dee celebrates her Beacon Theatre appearance; at right, with daughter Layonne Holmes.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LAYONNE HOLMES

Holiday Express was a project that Delores had been passionately involved in from its inception. Knowing this, I spoke to its founder Tim McLoone, who was kind enough to share his thoughts as well *[see sidebar]*.

It's fair to say that Holmes' performance on the post-9/11 *A Tribute to Heroes* telethon was a pinnacle point in her singing career. Together with her daughter, Layonne, they backed Springsteen when he performed "My City of Ruins" for this multi-network broadcast. The soulful, gospel blend of mother and daughter's voices added an extra dimension of poignancy to a song already so uncannily appropriate for this tragic occasion.

It goes without saying that losing a best friend, or a business partner or a singing partner or a housemate is a heartbreaking experience; but when all of the above relate to one single person, it's particularly hard to imagine the depth of Layonne Holmes's loss. Nevertheless, what follows is a wonderful insight into some of the things we didn't know about Delores Holmes from the person who knew and loved her best: her daughter.

I began by asking Layonne about the interview her mom gave Bob Makin for *Backstreets* #73 (Winter 2001/2002) in which she spoke about her early career as well as the telethon appearance.

The Bruce Springsteen Band, c. 1972...

PHOTO COURTESY OF BILLY SMITH

...and, along with Layonne, backing Bruce again three decades later.

***Backstreets:* I guess you probably have a copy of *Backstreets* magazine #73 in which your mom spoke to Bob Makin... it's a lovely interview, and she talks about you a lot! Can you remember anything about being at the rehearsals at the surfboard factory your Mom talked about?**

Layonne: I really don't remember those rehearsals—I was too young—but I do remember going back there a few times to visit Tinker [West, Bruce Springsteen Band manager] years later. You would never know what's behind those doors from the street. Tinker is just one of a kind.

What is your first memory of the music world your mom was a part of?

Besides singing with the family, of course, I remember going along to rehearsals and sessions here and there—sometimes to Bruce's place (in Holmdel, I think)—but I really saw her sing when we lived with some of her band mates in Elberon. She was a more timid person then, but her voice was raw and real. I don't think she knew how good she was then. After that she began singing with Gabriel Roth's band, and she blossomed in many ways—she began to understand her voice's power.

Your mom said that you and she were singing a two-part harmony to "Rockin' Robin" one day while washing dishes, and she knew from then that you would become her teacher. Did you ever feel like you were teaching her?

Musically, no—she definitely was my teacher. My mom had this way of singing with abandon that was so amazing. It's like she'd just go for it and not worry where she'd land, just letting the emotion carry her. I always loved and admired that in her. You know, you work hard to be skilled at your craft, but that emotional side is just a part of you and sometimes harder to develop. She would say that you've got it when you can marry the two.

In life, I think we taught each other; in a lot of ways, we experienced growing up together. Over the past couple years, I suppose our roles switched somewhat. I wanted to take the lead and do as much as I could to give her the most I could. It's the least I could do for the woman who sacrificed everything for me.

There's a really beautiful version of your mom singing "Shower the People" on your website. I'd love to know what the occasion was and who the other musicians were.

That was The Twilight Concert, one of the annual benefit concerts for the AIDS Resource Foundation for Children (www.aidsresource.org), a favored charity. Pat Guadagno is playing guitar and singing, along with Danny Petraitis, Lew Longo, Maureen McCrink, Pam Minson, Scott Paden and myself, and the rhythm section of Phil Rizzo on bass and Tom Minson on percussion. At the end of the song, the electricity suddenly cut out (hence the fade), and then the singing and hand-clapping really kicked in! This was not the first time that electricity acted strangely when Mom was around—she really did have something about her, we always took note of it. Even as a kid I used to ask her to sit down because she'd ruin the TV reception!

Your mom was very gifted, Layonne, and I know she will be sadly missed in, and by, the New Jersey music scene. She has, however, left a wonderful legacy in you. Is there anything else you would like to share?

A few years ago the Rock & Roll Music Fund held an impromptu fundraiser for Mom. She was about to have surgery related to the disease and would be out of work with heavy expenses. She wasn't up to attending, but I did—and the overwhelming positive energy in the Celtic Cottage that night was something I'll never forget. I met so many people from varying parts of her life and they all had a story to tell.

As the years went on, I've continued to have that experience, with so many people recounting how Mom touched them in some way, this little girl from Matawan who made her way through life with an open mind and heart. No matter how much love she gave, I never felt left out—she really had all of that to give. It's the greatest lesson she could've given me, and I hope to pass it on.

THE 'DEE SOUND'

Tim McLoone on Delores Holmes

PHOTO COURTESY OF BILLY SMITH

I first met Delores Holmes about 20 years ago. I knew of her as something of an iconic figure in the Jersey Shore music scene but hadn't really met her until she began performing at my club, McLoone's Rum Runner, in the late '80s. She was singing with people like Pat Guadagno and the late Dan Petraitis and really brought it every night. She just had this authentic soul sound that I would later come to understand was rooted both in her upbringing as a church singer but also, more importantly, from a tradition of gospel singing in her family.

Shortly thereafter, I hired her to do lead vocals on a song I had written, and she just knocked it out of the park. I was most impressed, however, by the professionalism she was to go on to exhibit to me over the next 20 years.

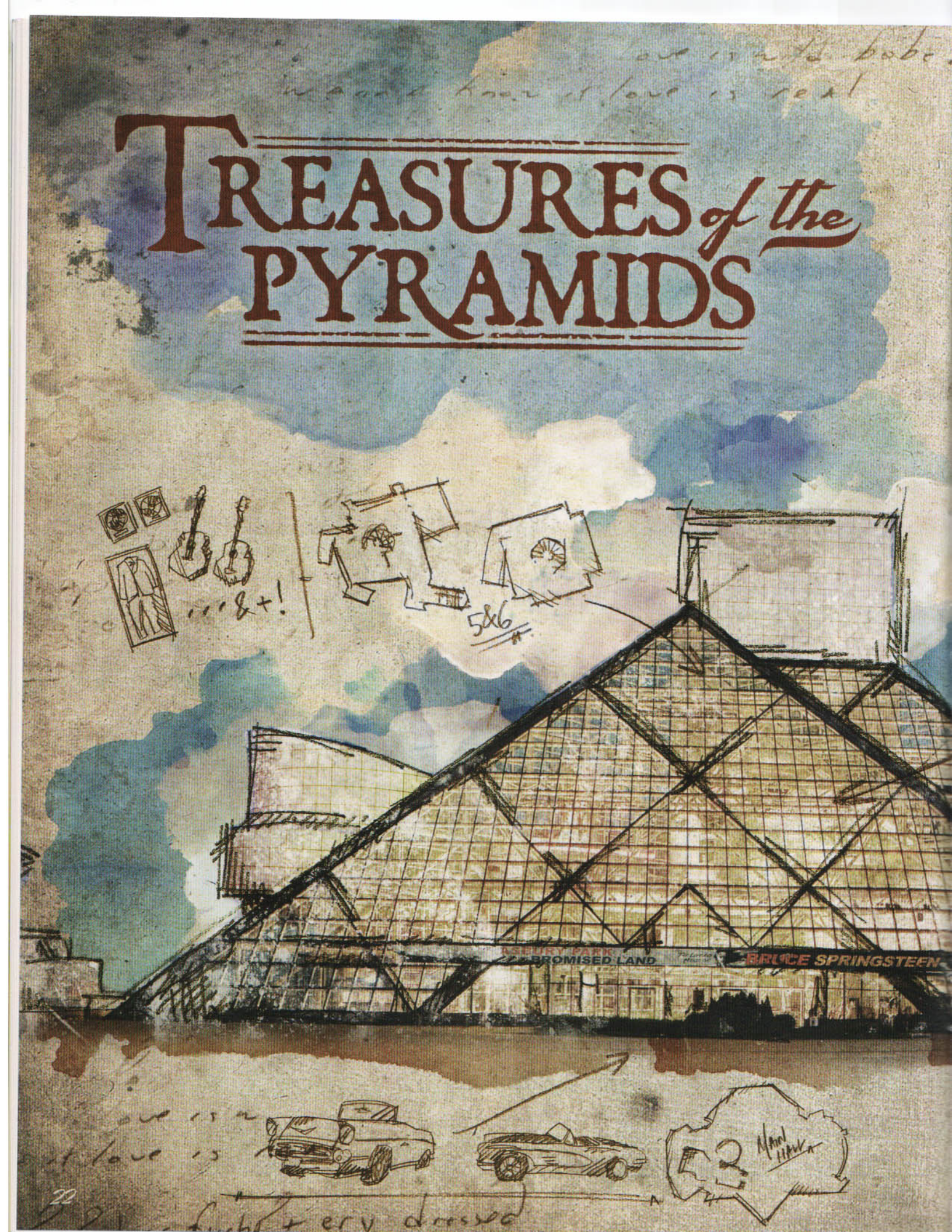
When I founded our charitable group, Holiday Express, in 1993, Delores was the first call I made. I knew that we would be going to many places that were mostly populated by minorities, and that we would need to be ethnically diverse to have the greatest impact. Dee was generous enough to me to allow for an open conversation about that and, along with her daughter Layonne and cousin Karen Credle-McGee, became a centerpiece of our performances over the past 17 years.

From there, I started Tim McLoone and the Shirleys, the "Shirleys" being Dee and Layonne, along with Maureen McCrink and Amy Broza. It's a 10-piece group that is still going today featuring a mix of R&B, American songbook, rock 'n' roll, originals, etc. Dee's illness had taken her out of the group pretty often over the last year, but she still found a way to get to the stage now and again. We were able to complete our upcoming CD *Meet the Shirleys* this past winter before she passed, and I am so thankful we have been able to memorialize the unique "Dee sound." At the end, she had to be wheeled into the studio and was so very frail. But as soon as the mic was live, so was Dee. She somehow was still able to summon up some soaring lead vocals as well as that outrageous harmony that really marked her career.

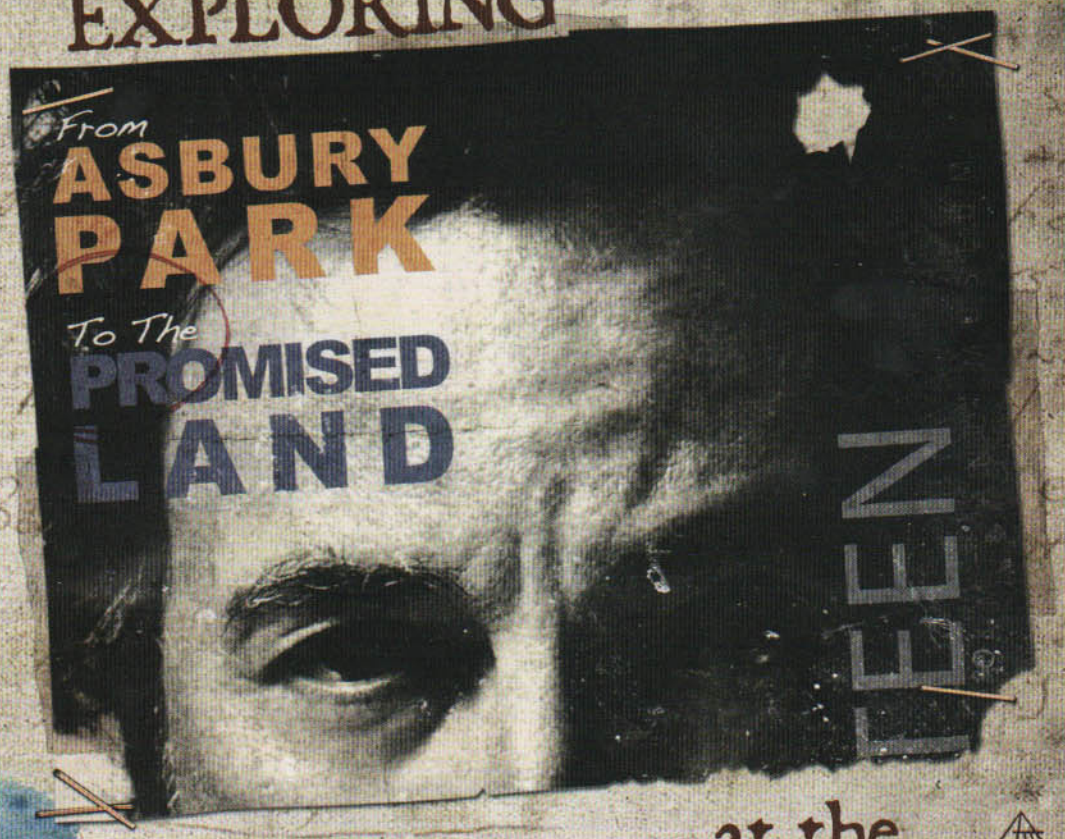
It still seems so strange that she is not coming back. She always did.

Visit www.shirleysonline.com and www.holidayexpress.org.

TREASURES of the PYRAMIDS



EXPLORING

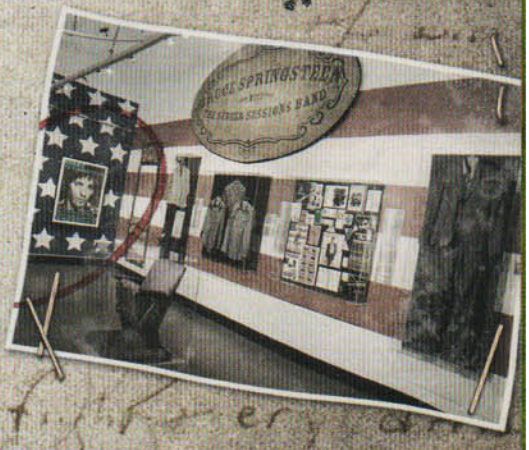


at the

ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME + MUSEUM

by

JOHN SOEDER



And here we've been calling him The Boss all these years. Turns out he's really The Admiral.

In 1984, in recognition of *Nebraska* (the album), Bruce Springsteen was commissioned to the admiralty of Nebraska (the state). A proclamation signed by then-governor Bob Kerrey and embellished with the requisite golden seals made it official. It reads, in part:

> *Know ye, that reposing special trust and confidence in the patriotism, valor, fidelity and abilities of Bruce Springsteen and knowing him to be a good fellow and a loyal friend and counselor, I have nominated him and do appoint him an Admiral in the Great Navy of the State of Nebraska. . . .*

The proclamation currently hangs in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland, where a major Springsteen retrospective was unveiled in April 2009. "From Asbury Park to the Promised Land: The Life and Music of Bruce Springsteen" is on view for an extended run through the end of 2010 in the pyramidal, I.M. Pei-designed landmark on the shores of Lake Erie.

It's a staggering installation. The stuff of which legends are made—an iconic electric guitar, a black leather jacket as renowned as any ever worn by Brando, the handwritten lyrics to numerous rock 'n' roll anthems, etc.—shares space with New Jersey juvenilia, souvenirs and curiosities picked up on the road to superstardom (including the odd admiralship) and the behind-the-scenes detritus of an artist at work. Put it this way: Touring the exhibit is the closest most of us will ever come to poking through Bruce's things, poring over his back pages and exploring the inner machinations of his restlessly creative mind.

Springsteen has always enjoyed a special relationship with Cleveland, as anyone who has ever heard a bootleg of the 1978 Agora concert can attest. (And if you haven't, fear not: you can hear excerpts at the Rock Hall.) Early in his career, Bruce won a strong following in the self-proclaimed "rock 'n' roll capital of the world," where the Rock Hall opened in 1995. Rock music has been a birthright in Cleveland since legendary disc jockey Alan Freed (whose ashes reside in the museum, incidentally) ruled the airwaves here in the 1950s.

Springsteen, a 1999 Rock Hall inductee, also has been a good friend to the institution and a regular at the induction ceremonies, where his speeches on behalf of incoming Hall of Famers have mixed heartfelt sentiments with big laughs. He did the honors for Roy Orbison, Bob Dylan, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Jackson Browne and U2.

RULES FOR UPSTAGE
1. IF YOU CAN'T LOVE THY NABOR... YOU MUST RESPECT HIM OR GET OUT.
2. NAKED GIRLS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED FOR MORE THAN THREE OR FOUR HOURS AT A TIME
3. IF YOU ARE ANNOYED WITH SOMEONE... DON'T REACT COME SEE ME... I'LL TAKE ACTION.
4. TOPLESS GIRLS MUST STAY AT LEAST THREE INCHES AWAY FROM THE NEAREST MALE.
5. DRESS IS OPTIONAL BUT SPLINTERS WILL BE REMOVED FROM FEET & ASSES AT OWNERS EXPENSE
6. IF YOU ARE CAUGHT WITH DRUGS OR BOOZE IN YOUR POSSESSION, YOU'RE LIABLE FOR EJECULATION and PROSECUTION
7. GIRLS WEARING HOT PANTS WILL SIT BY FIRE EXTINGUISHERS
8. ONCE YOU PAY TO COME IN YOU CAN NOT GO OUT ON THE STREET AND COME BACK IN AGAIN (FUZZ DON'T DO IT)
9. YOU MUST BE 17 YRS. OLD (AND PROVE IT) TO COME IN... 18 YRS. OLD AFTER 1 AM
WARNING TO PUSHERS... STATE NARCOS ARE HERE EVERY NIGHT AND THEY HAVE MY COOPERATION... SO DO YOUR THING ELSEWHERE IF YOU MUST BUT NOT ON MOUNTAIN... Thomas Paine KING OF THE MOUNTAIN

"We've always wanted to do an exhibit on Bruce Springsteen," said Jim Henke, the museum's vice president of exhibitions and curatorial affairs. "I'd talked to Jon Landau [Springsteen's manager is also chairman of the Rock Hall's nominating committee] about it from time to time, and the timing never seemed quite right."

By the summer of 2008, though, the stars were favorably aligned.

"I contacted Jon, and they were interested," Henke said.

"In August, I went out and started looking through Bruce's stuff..... Toby Scott [Springsteen's longtime recording engineer] was my point person on their side. I made up a wish list, then Toby and I would go back and forth on it. As he came across stuff in Bruce's warehouse, he would add things to the list, and we'd subtract other things.

"Bruce had final approval over everything. At a certain point, he started getting more interested in the exhibit himself.

"One day, I got an e-mail from Toby saying: 'I can't believe this, but Bruce wants to loan you the Fender Esquire.' "

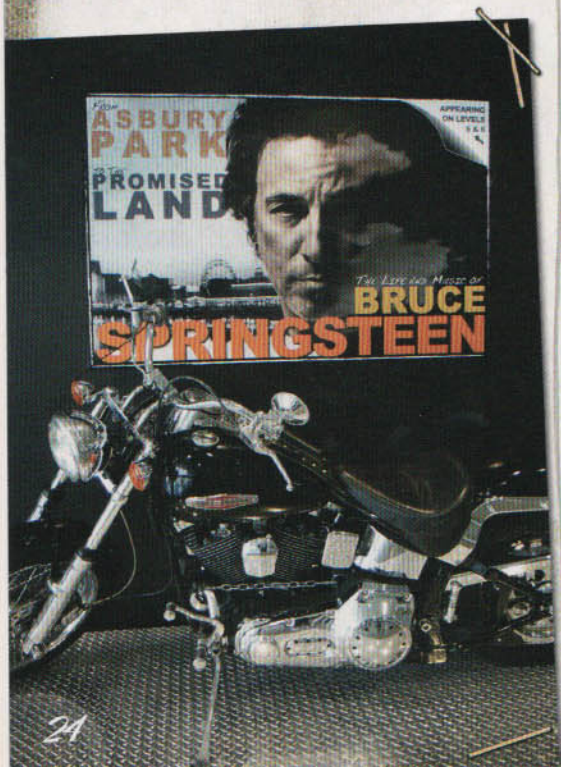
Yes, we're talking about one of the most famous guitars in the world, the one immortalized on the cover of *Born to Run*. More on that later.

Most of the exhibit occupies the uppermost floors of the Rock Hall, although you don't want to miss Bruce's cars on the lower level of the museum.

His 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air convertible is parked between ZZ Top's *Eliminator* coupe and Joan Jett's Jaguar. The yellow Bel Air (previously displayed at New York City's Rock Hall Annex, which closed in January 2010) was the first car that Bruce owned, purchased for $2,000 in 1975 and outfitted with twin four-barrel carburetors and a Hurst shifter. As far as suicide machines go, the convertible is in decent shape, aside from a few scratches and rust spots amid its hot-rod flames.

You'll find a different ride—Bruce's black 1960 Corvette, a gift to himself to celebrate the success of *Born to Run*—nearby in the museum's Ahmet Ertegun Main Exhibit Hall.

For any Springsteen faithful making a pilgrimage to the museum, the next stop is the fourth floor, where Bruce's 1989 Harley-Davidson is roped off. It's right around the corner from the giant inflatable schoolmaster from Pink Floyd's concert production of *The Wall*, who seems to be glaring disapprovingly in the general direction of Springsteen's motorcycle. Bruce rode it on a trip throughout the Southwest with his pals Matt, Tony and Eddie DiLea.



The exhibit shifts into high gear on the fifth floor, where you can immerse yourself in the first quarter-century of Springsteen's life, from his formative years in New Jersey in the '50s and '60s through the 1975 breakthrough of *Born to Run*.

Family photos fill one case. Bruce's grandfather, Fred Springsteen, poses outside the Freehold Electrical Shop, which he owned. Bruce's father, Douglas Springsteen, sits on a rumpled blanket on an unidentified beach. There are snapshots of Bruce as a young boy, too. We see him squinting into the light on the boardwalk in Asbury Park circa 1954 (he would've been around 5 years old), seated on a bench with younger sister Virginia; their feet do not reach the ground. In other shots,

Album #2 Track Listings

1. Santa Ana
2. Circus Song
3. Kitty's Back
4. Thundercrack
5. Sandy
6. NYC Serenade
7. Zero and Blind Terry
8. Rosalita

1. Kitty's Back
2. The E Street Shuffle
3. New York City Serenade
4. Fourth of July, Asbury Park (Sandy the Aurora is rising behind us)
5. Incident on the W. Side
6. Circus
7. Rosalita
8. Valentine's Day/Paradise 1953

Album #2 Titles

Circle of Lions
Natchez-Under
American Summer
Sometimes at Night
From the Churches to the Jails
The Legend of Zero & Blind Terry
Firing Point
Big Town
The Wild & the Innocent
The Hungry & the Hunted
Line of Fire
In Heaven Someday
E Street Shuffle

they're riding the merry-go-round and a flying gondola. Another picture captures a young Bruce in a suit with his hands folded reverently as he stands in front of a tabernacle; the occasion and the setting are not identified, although it's presumably a photo from his First Holy Communion at Saint Rose of Lima in Freehold.

Springsteen's first band of note, the Castiles, is represented with a wealth of memorabilia, including a bar of Dr. Hunter's Castile Soap (from whence the group took its name) and the set list from a gig at the Upstage Club in Asbury Park. The group's repertoire included covers of "Up on the Roof," "Don't Be Cruel" and "Lucille."

In 1966, the Castiles recorded two songs, "That's What You Get" and "Baby I," credited to Springsteen and singer-guitarist George Theiss. A single never saw the light of day, but you can check out the tunes (no strangers to the collector community) at a listening station. "That's What You Get" jangles in a Byrds vein; "Baby I" is a pleading slice of garage rock.

Castiles scrapbooks put together by Marion Vinyard, wife of band manager Tex Vinyard, include a petition that reads: "We, the undersigned, petition that the Castiles get some recognition...." It has 42 signatures. The opposite page lists nicknames for band members, including a certain "Brucie Babe."

Some of Springsteen's other early musical outfits, including Child and Steel Mill, are the subject of various concert flyers and other mementoes.

Child, whose ranks also included future E Streeters Danny Federici and Vini Lopez, came together at the Upstage Club. A poster from the venue, circa 1969, humorously spells out the house rules. For example: "DRESS IS OPTIONAL BUT SPLINTERS WILL BE REMOVED FROM FEET AND ASSES AT OWNERS EXPENSE."

Child morphed into Steel Mill, whose lineup was graced by the presence of one Steve Van Zandt. A doodle-adorned stenographer's pad from the Steel Mill days, circa '70-'71, is open to a Springsteen composition titled "Clouds." Above the first verse (*"As my mind bends clouds into dreams that I like / As the sun disappears into the night / I look and you have gone. . . ."*), Springsteen jotted down the chord changes: C to F, C to F, E minor to G.

Springsteen has taken heat in recent years for his political outspokenness, although the exhibit reminds us this is hardly anything new. Among the dozens of posters on display is one (hand-lettered in pink marker) for a benefit show for Democratic presidential nominees George McGovern, held July 5, 1972, at the Cinema III in Red Bank, NJ, and headlined by the Bruce Springsteen Band. Talk about a good deal: The suggested $3 donation covered not only the concert, but a movie, too.

You'll want to linger at the next listening station. It features eight songs from Springsteen's Columbia Records audition with John Hammond on May 3, 1972, (four of which were included on the *Tracks* boxed set) as well as live material from a May 9, 1974, concert at the Harvard Square Theatre in Cambridge, MA, (where Jon Landau "saw rock and roll future") and the August 9, 1978, concert at Cleveland's Agora Theatre.

"Bruce Springsteen, Columbia pop audition, job number 79682. 'Mary Queen of Arkansas,' take one...' " Hammond says.

Cue plaintive acoustic-guitar chords, courtesy of Bruce. Then he begins to sing, perhaps a bit tentatively: *"Mary Queen of Arkansas, it's not too early for dreamin'...."*

As the audition proceeds, the mood becomes increasingly relaxed.

"Bruce and his Yamaha," Hammond announces. In the background, Bruce can be heard giggling. "'Growin' Up,' take one," Hammond continues. It sounds as if the legendary talent spotter is having fun, too.

"'Does This Bus Stop at 82nd Street?' Bruce?" Hammond says prior to the song of the same name, as if he were asking Springsteen for mass-transit advice. More laughter ensues.

The master Scotch magnetic tape reels from the audition are enshrined nearby, along with boxes labeled with running orders.

On the first reel:
Mary Queen of Arkansas
Saint in the City
Jazz Musician
If I Was a Priest
Arabian Nights

On the second reel:
Growin' Up
Does This Bus Stop at 82nd Street?
Two Hearts in True Waltz Time
Street Queen
Angels
Southern Sun
Cowboys of the Seas

Among the artifacts relating to Springsteen's first two albums, *Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.*, and *The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle* (both released in 1973), are notebook pages overflowing with handwritten lyrics and other rough ideas. On one page, Springsteen was toying with titles for his second album. In the running were *American Summer* (still a great one; let's hope Bruce gets around to revisiting it someday), *War and Roses* and *Up from the Street*.

The Notebooks

by GLENN RADECKI

They've been discussed occasionally in the media, particularly in interviews with Jon Pareles and Ted Koppel at the time of the release of *The Rising*. Several pages were reproduced in *Songs*, and a picture of a page or two can sometimes be seen in online memorabilia auctions. Yet before the opening of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's "From Asbury Park to the Promised Land" exhibit, fans had never before been able to see in such quantity what Bruce Springsteen had been writing about in his spiral-bound notebooks for the past 35 years.

These notebooks—some with open to pages of interest, and pages from others blown up to poster size—make up a sizeable portion of the exhibit in Cleveland and certainly are among the most revealing items on display. Handwritten in ballpoint pen are song ideas, titles, album track listings and lyrics dating from the *Greetings* period to *The Rising*, all with Bruce's unmistakable looped Ts.

Throughout the exhibit, Bruce's notebooks offer several glimpses of what could have been on several albums. In addition to a well-known alternate *Born in the U.S.A.* running order (including "Murder Incorporated," "This Hard Land" and "My Love Will Not Let You Down"), two alternate sequences for *The Wild, The Innocent & The E Street Shuffle* can be seen. Another *Darkness* era-notebook shows Bruce working on no fewer than four track lists for the album, all different from the released version.

Page after page of song titles shows many that were eventually put to use, but also others such as "Between Flesh and Fantasy" and "The Hungry and the Hunted" that were purposed for lyrics in "Jungleland." Conversely, the in-progress lyric sheets reveal that Bruce found the title to his first Top Ten hit from a description of the character in "Stolen Car."

Close examination of the lyrics (there are pages for practically every major composition) reveal numerous interesting details. Bits of some songs can be found in others, as lyrics from "Blinded By the Light" are present in early versions of "Growin' Up" and "For You." For several songs, including "Adam Raised a Cain" or "Glory Days," verses one and two are complete with the rest of the song unfinished. In others, there are key lines that were omitted from the finished product: "I want a chance to win what ain't ever been won" never made it to "Badlands," and "I thank God I'm alive" was left out of "The Fuse."

The revelations from the notebooks are endless. "Streets of Fire" was clearly a title Bruce had at the ready, as that page contains not a single lyric from the song's released version. A "Racing in the Street" page is mostly complete, save a minor change for a line that didn't quite scan properly: "from the fire roads to the interstate" was originally "fire roads to the turnpike gates." In "Atlantic City," several drafts show Bruce's actual progress writing the song, with his attempts to find the right place for the "where the sand's turning to gold" line and then as he worked in the "in between there's just winners and losers" idea.

Alternate Lyrics

EARLY FIRST VERSE OF "THE RISING"

Got a brother in front of me
Got a sister taking up behind
I can feel this eternal chain that binds me
Keep me moving up the line

ALTERNATE BRIDGE TO "BRILLIANT DISGUISE"

Well I thought I knew love
But I didn't know
Now I'm caught in a trap
and I'm going down slow
I'm just a lonely pilgrim...

"WORKING ON THE HIGHWAY" VERSES-IN-PROGRESS

I'm gonna show her on my honor that my love is pure and true
If I gotta drop a two lane blacktop from here to Timbuktu

I'm gonna show her she'll never find a love to match this love of mine
'cept out here on this 2 lane blacktop with the little white line

I'm gonna prove to her daddy that I'm here to stay
If I gotta drop a 2 lane blacktop from NY to LA

Around the same time, Bruce was scribbling down possibilities for band names. One option: The Snakers Band. He also was fixated on the notion of having "North" in the name, at least momentarily.

Imagine, if you will: "Ladies and gentlemen... Bruce Springsteen and the North End Band!" Doesn't quite have the same ring to it, does it? The list of other pre-E Street Band possibilities included the North Side Band and the North Ward Band.

Stationed among the displays are several video monitors, the most intriguing of which features concert footage from 1973 gigs at Max's Kansas City and Nassau Community College, as well as a 1975 show at the old Carlton Theatre (now the Count Basie Theatre) in Red Bank, N.J., and a 1978 show at Houston's Sam Houston Coliseum.

The *Born to Run* portion of the exhibit is especially rich, starting with the black leather jacket that Bruce wore on the album cover. It's well-worn (bordering on lived-in), with silver stars on the epaulets and red trim inside the collar. It also appears surprisingly small.

More notebook pages demand a closer look, too. One presents tantalizing running orders for "Album #3," as it was known at the time *[see sidebar]*. Another page finds Bruce wrestling with what to call the album that would become *Born to Run*. Among the rejected titles: *Between Flesh... and Fantasy* (too 42nd Street?), *Escape from Asbury Park* (too sci-fi melodramatic?) and *Circle of Tigers* (too Bruce Lee?).

Of particular interest to *Backstreets* readers might be a rough draft of "Backstreets," back when the song was known as "Back Streets." Under the title, Bruce has made a quick note about the feel of the music: *"(Shirelles) – sha la la (Baby It's You)."*

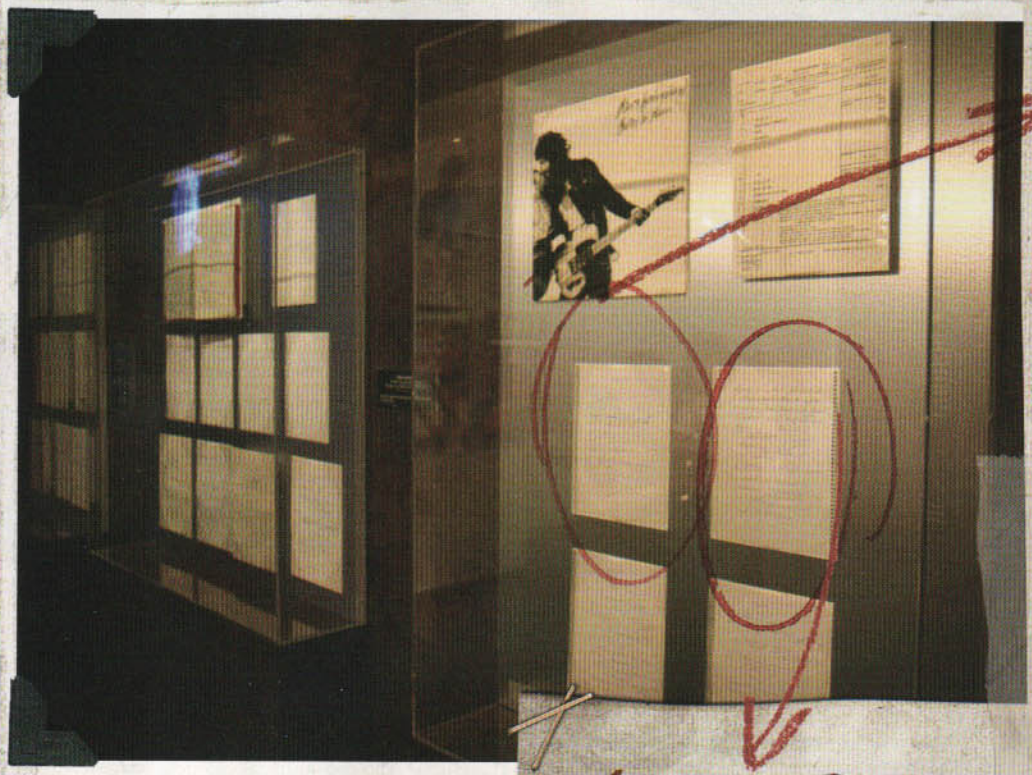
Then comes the first line: *"One soft infested summer Billy and Joey became friends. . . ."*

Billy and Joey? Who are Billy and Joey? And what have they done with Terry?

Amusingly, in the margin of the same manuscript, Bruce has written a name ("Delores") and a phone number. Elsewhere, on a rough draft of "Born to Run," the name of another woman ("Kim") is written, along with another phone number. You just don't get this kind of "action" in, say, Leonardo da Vinci's journals.

A scrapbook from the same period is open to a 1975 Village Voice article with the headline: "Is Springsteen Worth the Hype?" Another scrapbook contains a letter from Los Angeles Times critic Robert Hilburn to Bruce's mother, dated November 5, 1975. "Sorry for the delay in answering your note," Hilburn writes. "What did you think of the *Time* and *Newsweek* stories?"

Rounding out the *Born to Run* section are instruments from several E Street Band members, including Federici's hand-built glockenspiel (heard on "Born to Run," "Thunder Road," "Candy's Room," etc.), Van Zandt's X-79 Guild electric guitar with its zebra-stripe paint job (seen in the "Glory Days" video) and Clarence Clemons' Selmer tenor saxophone (never mind the corrosion—this was the sax on which he summoned the immortal "Jungleland" solo).



Upon ascending a spiral staircase to the sixth (and topmost) floor of the Rock Hall, you practically find yourself face to face with Bruce's celebrated Fender Esquire. As you gaze upon it, you might be forgiven for imagining that the instrument is illuminated by a single shaft of light direct from heaven, while a choir of angels sings "Thunder Road" on high.

The storied six-string is actually a Frankenstein instrument, combining the neck of a '52 Fender Esquire and the body of a '54 Fender Telecaster. In spots, the wood finish is worn away like the top of an ancient school desk.

Springsteen's guitar tech, Kevin Buell, personally escorted the guitar—one of several in the exhibit—on its flight to Cleveland and hand-delivered it to Henke.

"Normally, we use art handlers to ship things, but the Fender Esquire is so special that Bruce had Kevin personally bring it to Cleveland," Henke said.

"Kevin told me I had to be here at the museum to accept it, because he wasn't going to give it to anybody he didn't know. The story I heard is that when Bruce was on tour, this guitar would always go on the plane with him and the band. It didn't go with the other equipment."

In a noteworthy twist, Springsteen briefly borrowed the Fender Esquire back in December 2009.

"They were filming some live footage for the *Darkness on the Edge of Town* box set, and Bruce wanted to play the Fender Esquire for that," Henke said. "Kevin came out again and picked it up. It was gone for a weekend, then we got it back."

Bruce discusses the Fender Esquire at length in a listening-station interview with Henke, which can be heard on the fourth-

Album #3 Titles

Between Flesh... and Fantasy
Born to Run
Getting Out Alive
Fancy
Valentine
Palace Amusements
Escape From Asbury Park
Gimmie Action
Beyond the Palace
Deep Action
Young and Willing
Of Love & Defiance
Crossfire
A Night at the Palace (A Surfer's Stomp)
Mansions of Pride
Mansions of Glory
Mansions of Passion
A Love So Fine
Fire Alley
I'm Alive
The Restless Ones
So Young and In Love
Westside 482
Fastest Man Alive
Lonely Are the Brave
At the Eastern Gate
Walk in the Sun
They May Have Once Held Heaven
Broken Brothers
Golden Horses

New Album #3 (Songs)

1. Born to Run
2. Jungle Land
3. Baby & Me (Blondie)
4. Lonely Night at the Beach
5. Born to Win
6. Wild Billy's Song to Orphans
7. Shootout in Chinatown
8. Street Fight
9. Jr. Walker Groove - A Love So Fine
10. Orbison - Born to Be Alone

1. Born to Run
2. Jungleland
3. A Love So Fine
4. She's the One
5. Lonely Night in the Park
6. Thunder Hill
7. Latin Song
8. Street Fight
9. A Song For Orphans
10. Dual
11. Here She Comes Walkin'
12. New Delinquent Lovers
13. Glory Road

Circle of Tigers
Arena
Firing Point
Paradise Road
Promised Land
Poems for Orphans
Jungleland
In Search of the Promised Land
American Summer
Backstreets
Dark End of the Street
The Duke Walks On!
One Summer Night
The Street Goes On Forever
Paradise Street
The Magic Rat
One Walk in the Sun
Young Guns
Surrender at the Citadel
The Cold Summer
Ride Into Tears
Just in Time for Summer
Slaughter City
Midnight Boys

Darkness Track Listings

1
Badlands
Don't Look Back
Something in the Night
Candy's Room
Racing in the Street

Adam Raised a Cain
Streets of Fire
Prove It All Night
The Promised Land
Darkness on the Edge of Town

2
Badlands
Candy's Room
Something in the Night
Factory
Racing in the Street

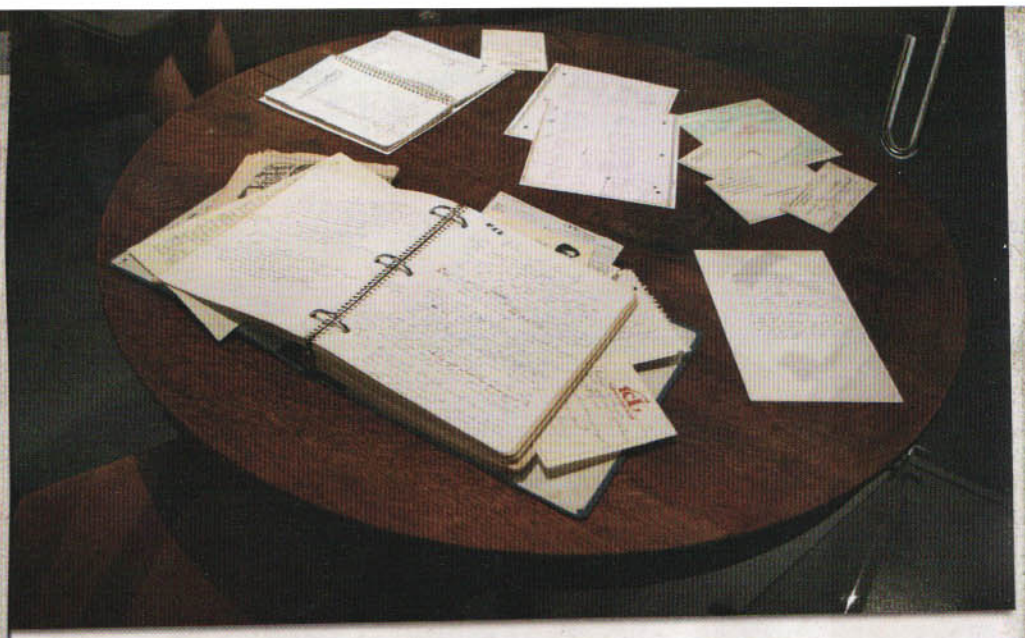
Adam Raised a Cain
Streets of Fire
Prove It All Night
The Promised Land
Darkness on the Edge of Town

3
Badlands
Adam Raised a Cain
Something in the Night
Prove It All Night
Darkness on the Edge of Town

The Promised Land
Factory
Racing in the Street
Drive All Night

4
Badlands
Adam Raised a Cain
Something in the Night
Racing in the Street
Factory

Prove It All Night
The Promised Land
Darkness on the Edge of Town
The Promise



floor. Springsteen recalls buying the guitar for "$180—maybe $185" at Phil Petillo's guitar shop in Belmar, N.J. Bruce mentions that he was in the market for a "versatile" instrument, and then some.

"It was the receptor of all my hopes and dreams," he says.

The Fender Esquire is surrounded by other instruments, including the Gibson J-45 acoustic guitar (a Christmas gift from Toby Scott) that Springsteen strummed on *The Ghost of Tom Joad* and *Devils & Dust*, as well as a couple of Hohner Marine Band harmonicas.

Gearheads also will delight in the TEAC four-track tape recorder on which Springsteen took a lo-fi departure for 1982's *Nebraska*. It's a remarkably primitive-looking device, at least from the vantage point of the Pro Tools age in which we now live.

An entire wall is filled with yet more handwritten lyric manuscripts spanning numerous albums, from 1978's *Darkness on the Edge of Town* to 2002's *The Rising*. It's interesting to study the subtle evolution of Springsteen's penmanship. The deeper you get into his career, the less cramped and the more free-flowing his handwriting appears, as if his muse were urging him to relax while picking up the pace.

It was Springsteen's idea to send along the circular wood table at which he would frequently sit to write songs at home. At the Rock Hall, the table is cluttered with lyric notebooks, a June 1975 utility bill from the Jersey Central Power & Light Company to the tune of $77.08, and a message from John Hammond, who apparently tried calling Bruce at 11:10 a.m. on March 22, 1978, when he was in Room 2403 of an unspecified hotel.

At this point, it's reasonable to ask: Sheesh—did this guy save *everything*?

1. Born in the U.S.A.
2. Murder Inc.
3. Downbound Train
4. Glory Days
5. Hard Land
6. My Love
7. Bye Bye Johnny
8. Frankie
9. Down Down Down
10. Workin' on the Highway
(11. I'm on Fire)

1. Don't Back Down
2. Sugar Land
3. One Love
4. Little Girl Like You
5. Dream Song
6. Shut Out the Lights
7. Don't Back Down (Rock)

So it would seem, judging from the rest of the exhibit. It encompasses all manner of odds and ends, from a pseudo-sculpture that Springsteen fashioned from hotel keys in the mid-'70s (a commentary on life on the road?) to a menu from Peter's Pizza House in San Francisco (home of the "Bruce Special Pizza," complete with salami, linguica and garlic) to a Blistex "Beautiful Lips" Award bestowed upon Bruce in 1986.

You'll find more of Bruce's greatest fashion hits, too, including the everyman ensemble that he sported on the cover of 1984's *Born in the U.S.A.* The distinctive hole in the left back pocket of the blue jeans clearly identifies them as the same pair from the album art work. But can we really be absolutely certain that it's the very same white T-shirt?

"That's what they told us," Henke said.

The Rock Hall also has the red baseball cap that was tucked into Bruce's pocket on the album cover. The cap is a faded relic bearing a logo for REMBASS, a battlefield sensor system developed at Camp Evans in New Jersey. How the cap came to be in Bruce's possession is unclear. Garden State singer-songwriter Lance Larson has said he gave the cap to Bruce; others claim he got the cap from a female acquaintance. The Rock Hall merely identifies it as the cap from *Born in the U.S.A.*, without delving into the backstory.

Similarly, we're left to speculate about the faded stain (Ketchup? Tomato sauce? Blood?) on the plaid flannel shirt that Springsteen wore on the cover of 1980's *The River*. Befitting a working-class hero, the cuffs are frayed and the elbows are torn.

This gallery is also where you can peruse the paperwork for Springsteen's admiralty commission. Landlocked Nebraska has a navy—who knew? The appointment may be tongue-in-cheek (the proclamation goes on to mention *"goldfish under his command..."*), although the honorary title is real, one shared by a host of other distinguished honorees ranging from Bing Crosby to Ann Landers to Martin Luther King III.

Since the Rock Hall opened 15 years ago, it has mounted exhibits focused on everyone from John Lennon to U2 to the Clash, among others.

The Springsteen retrospective is the most comprehensive installation to date devoted to a single artist, according to Henke.

"It's a very in-depth look at Bruce Springsteen's career," Henke said. "Even the most die-hard fans will see things they've never seen before."

Private collectors loaned a few artifacts, although most of the items on display came directly from Springsteen. Before his notebooks and other documents went on view at the Rock Hall, the papers were touched up at the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts in Philadelphia, which specializes in conserving documents.

Bruce "understood that people like to see this stuff," Henke said.

"He told me a funny story about meeting these people in Barcelona who told him they had gone to Asbury Park on their summer vacation. He was like, 'Why would you go from Barcelona to Asbury Park?!'

"But Bruce himself made a pilgrimage to Memphis to see Sun Studio. He recognized that people would like to see the things he used to create his music. He felt the fans would like it, which is one of the reasons he thought this would be a good thing to do."

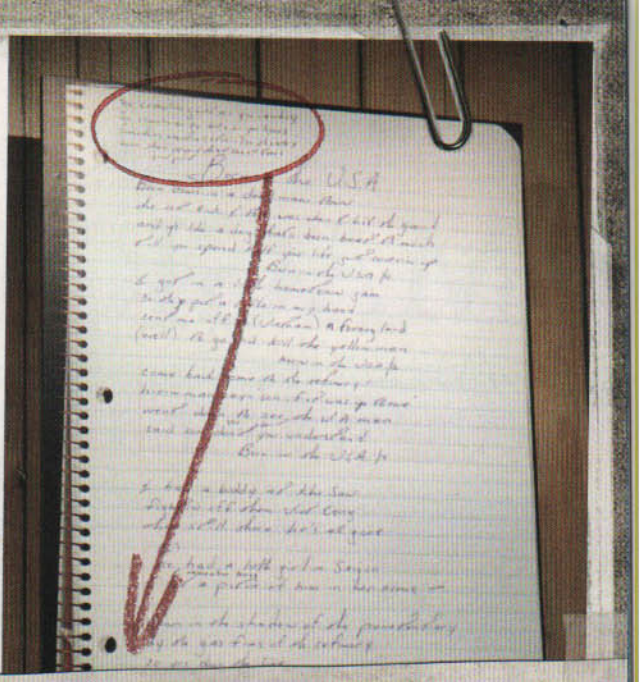
Hardcore devotees—i.e., your average *Backstreets* reader—easily could spend several hours taking in the exhibit, let alone the rest of the 150,000-square-foot Rock Hall. It draws about 450,000 visitors annually.

As of press time, Bruce himself had yet to check out the retrospective. When he stopped in Cleveland in November 2009 on the *Working on a Dream* tour, he reportedly didn't have enough down time to swing by the museum.

In conjunction with the exhibit, the Rock Hall hosted a Springsteen FanFest in June 2009, with appearances by Springsteen documentarian Thom Zimny, Springsteen biographer Dave Marsh, and *Backstreets* editor Chris Phillips. A similar event took place in June 2010, including an appearance by Toby Scott and a panel discussion on Springsteen's ties to Cleveland.

In January 2010, the exhibit was refreshed with a few new pieces, including the black, vaguely militaristic Dior jacket that Springsteen wore during the pre-inaugural "We Are One" concert for Barack Obama in Washington, D.C. Several awards also have been added, including Springsteen's Grammys for *The Rising* and "Radio Nowhere," his Golden Globe for "The Wrestler" and his rainbow-ribboned Kennedy Center Honor.

"They call him The Boss," U2's Bono said when he inducted Springsteen into the Rock Hall. "Well, that's a bunch of crap. . . . He works *for* us."



go crawlin quiet as you can boy
go crawlin on your belly on your knees
something waiting (stirrin) in the valley
down there beyond (just past) that line of trees

If you walk away from the exhibit with anything, it's a deeper appreciation for just how hard Springsteen actually plugs away at his craft, especially after you've viewed page after page of musical works in progress. They reveal a songwriter who is constantly revising and refining, revising and refining, revising and refining, in relentless pursuit of a perfectly turned phrase to capture some universal truth. Or at least a decent rhyme for *"Beyond the Palace hemi-powered drones scream down the boulevard."*

While the exhibit retraces a journey as epic as any of those embarked upon by some of the characters in Springsteen's songs, it's not so much the grand sweep of it all that really strikes you, but little things like a pocket-sized address book from the early '70s, opened to the 'C' section. Next to some barely legible lyrics (an early pass at "Does This Bus Stop at 82nd Street?," apparently: *"Senorita, Spanish rose..."*), Bruce has scrawled in pencil:

"Clarence Clemens [sic] 521-2934."

The blue-ruled pages have faded with the passage of time, yet the entry is enough to teleport you right back to the birth of one of the most famous friendships in rock 'n' roll history. Sort of takes your breath away, doesn't it?

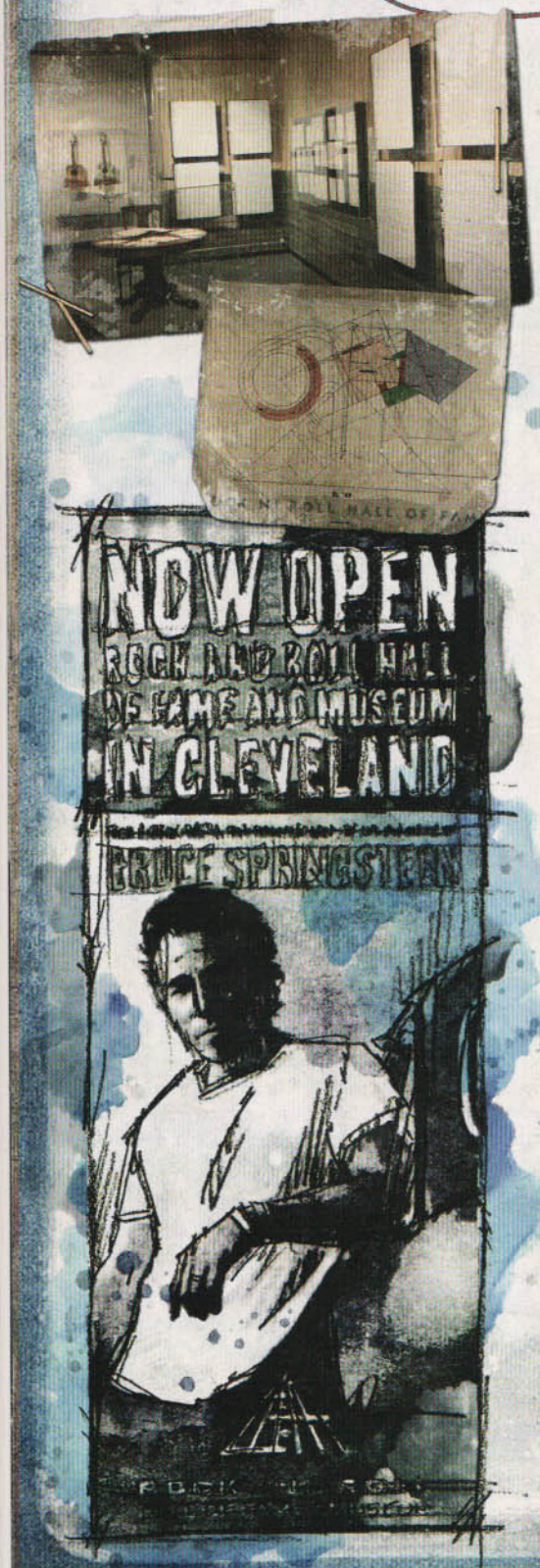
And just think: Eventually, The Boss—er, The Admiral—would even learn how to spell The Big Man's name.

Photographs by Christopher Phillips. Big thanks to Marc Sans & Oscar Perales at OyeMe! Disseny (www.oyeme.net) for the design assist.

From Asbury Park to the Promised Land: The Life and Music of Bruce Springsteen is open at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame + Museum in Cleveland through the end of 2010.

the MAGICIAN'S TOOLS

CURATOR JIM HENKE SPEAKS WITH BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN



JIM HENKE: So, why now? Why did you decide to do the exhibit at this point in your life?

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: I thought you guys decided it *[laughs]*. I didn't know I decided it, I thought it was decided!

Well, it seems like you've kept a lot of things from your career over the years: your songwriting notebooks, guitars, posters, all that stuff. Is that a conscious thing? You just wanted to save a lot of this stuff?

No—the pack rat is Max, Max Weinberg. And I think Danny kept a few things. But I didn't keep much. I was sort of superstitious about hoarding all that stuff, and I tended to let everything pass with the exception of only the things I needed to work. So I never collected guitars, anything. I only collected guitars that I played, you know? Until probably the early '90s, when Patti and I got a real house and said, gee, it would be nice to have a nice guitar in this room, or that room…. Until then, I was into the sort of idea that it was all about what I could carry into your town—literally. And so I didn't collect. I saved my notebooks, because they had all my songs in them. And that was really it.

When we started to look around, we found pictures and posters and stuff that got basically put to the wayside—not with any collecting idea in mind, just, you know, stuff that you have *[laughs]*.

So the exhibit starts with the Castiles, and then comes up to the present. You were 14 when you joined the Castiles?

Yeah, now the Castiles… that notebook was from a woman named Marion Vinyard. My mother didn't make those notebooks, it was Tex Vinyard's wife—and Tex Vinyard was, of course, a factory worker in Freehold and the manager of the Castiles. We rehearsed in his little shotgun-style house, which was right across the street from Caiazzo Music—where we slobbered over the window on a regular basis—and about 25 yards from the rug mill, where my dad and an enormous part of the town at one time worked, in a part of town called Texas.

So I was about 14. I was in a band; I got thrown out of my first band because they told me my guitar was too cheap—and it *was* pretty cheap, but it wasn't that bad. So I literally got thrown out because my guitar wasn't good enough.

What was that band called?

I think we were called the Rogues at the time. So it kinda pissed me off, and I went home that night and I remember I put on "It's All Over Now" by the Rolling Stones, and I forced myself to learn the lead. I just sat there for hours until I learned that very rudimentary lead that [Keith Richards] plays on "It's All Over Now." It was the beginning of my lead guitar career.

A few months later, George Thiess—who was dating my sister, Virginia—knocked on my door, told me he had a band, wanted to know if I played lead guitar. I told him that I did (which I barely did), and he took me over to Tex's house, and I met the other guys in the Castiles. There was a bass player, who we thought of as being elderly, who was probably in his late 20s at the time. He began to teach me some more rudimentary things on the guitar, and it was sort of the beginning of my guitar playing career and the Castiles, which for a teenage band lasted quite a while. I think we lasted '65, '66, and '67, it was pretty longstanding. We played in Greenwich Village in the Café Wha?; for one of your first bands, we got around pretty good.

Back then, was that when you were playing the Kent Guitar?

The Kent guitar, yes. Mine disappeared, and about two or three years ago I was thumbing through a vintage guitar magazine, and lo and behold they had a small article on Kent guitars. And there was mine! It seemed to be one of the remaining two in the world. And I immediately said "Kevin, call this guy up right now and get me that guitar!" I think we paid about the same that I paid for it when I bought it, was which was something like $60. And the funny thing was, when I got it again, it played really well. I was surprised at how well it played.

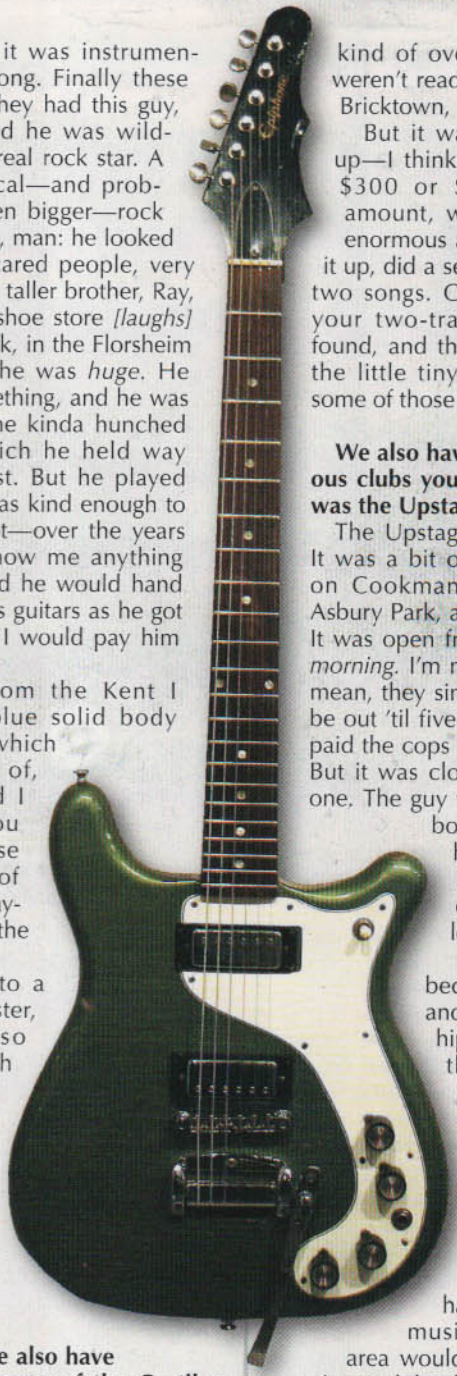
And then there was another fellow—Kevin could tell you exactly who, I think he worked for Boston at one time—and he was kind enough to send me another one. So for a while I had two. I had one in each of my son's rooms. It's nice to have that piece back, because that was really the piece that turned me into a lead guitarist, that single-pickup Kent guitar.

What kind of guitar did you get after the Kent, do you remember?

After the Kent guitar, I went way, way upscale, and I had a blue solid body Epiphone. Ray Cichone—there were two Cichone brothers, they were in a band called the Motifs, they were incredibly influential. They were older than us, amazingly influential musicians in the area at the time. First of all, they were the first band that sang. You have to understand there was a *before* and *after* The Beatles. Before The Beatles and the British Invasion, no one sang. All local bands were instrumental and based on the Ventures, "Pipeline"... it was all instrumental music. When you went to the high school dance and the local band played, it was instrumental music all night long. Finally these guys came in, and they had this guy, Walter Cichone, and he was wild-looking... he was a real rock star. A real, true-to-life, local—and probably could have been bigger—rock star. He just had it all, man: he looked great, sang great, scared people, very sexual. And he had a taller brother, Ray, who worked in the shoe store *[laughs]* in Asbury Park, I think, in the Florsheim Shoe Store. Except he was *huge*. He was like 6'5" or something, and he was a little gawky, and he kinda hunched over his guitar, which he held way up high on his chest. But he played incredibly. And he was kind enough to show me a lot—over the years he would show me anything I asked—and he would hand me down his guitars as he got better ones. I would pay him a little money.

And so from the Kent I went to a blue solid body Epiphone—which I have one of, actually, and I should give you that one, because there are a lot of pictures of me playing that thing in the Castiles.

Then I went to a Fender Stratocaster, which was also Ray's—which I didn't think sounded as good as the blue Epiphone, but it looked better, and I just decided I was gonna play it.



We also have the copy of the Castiles recording, the two songs you guys recorded. What was that like when you went into those sessions?

It was a tiny little room, maybe half the size of this living room, which is not that big, and they couldn't stand any volume whatsoever going into the microphones. We had to turn all our amps to the wall and literally put covers over them. And the guitars sounded real klinky, because we had the volume turned down to "one"—we couldn't get any distortion or speaker sound out of it. The recording studio was not set up in those days for any kind of overdrive; they just simply weren't ready to record rock bands in Bricktown, New Jersey in 1965.

But it was a big deal. We saved up—I think it cost us, I don't know, $300 or $100, some enormous amount, what we thought was an enormous amount money. We saved it up, did a session where we cut those two songs. Of course, they give you your two-track, which we recently found, and they give you the acetates, the little tiny 45-sized acetates. And some of those survived, also.

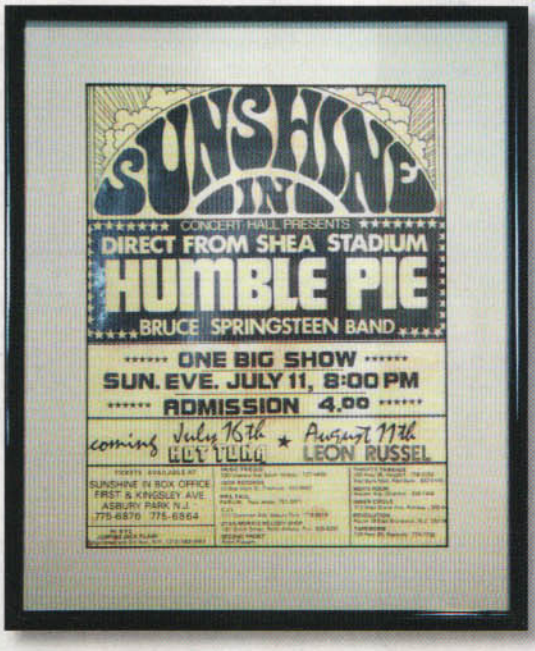
We also have a lot of stuff from various clubs you played back then. What was the Upstage Club like?

The Upstage Club was an anomaly. It was a bit of a freak because it was on Cookman Aveune in downtown Asbury Park, and they served no booze. It was open from eight until *five in the morning*. I'm not sure how they did it! I mean, they simply allowed teenagers to be out 'til five a.m. I don't know if they paid the cops off or what the story was. But it was closed between twelve and one. The guy was sort of an old-school bohemian, Tom Potter, and his wife played the guitar. He would throw everyone out for one hour and then let everybody back in.

Its importance was because it was open so late, and because it had a bit of a hip vibe, and bands, when they came down to the Shore to play—it was a place where bands came from Long Island, from Pennsylvania, all over, in the summertime—at the end of their gigs, they would go to the Upstage. And so you had a moment when every musician in the immediate area would show up there at some point, and the thing to do was, of course, to play. So you saw everybody get up and play, just people from all over. And everyone was waiting for the next—who was gonna be the next gunslinger? Everyone was waiting for the gunslingers to come in.

I came in from Freehold one night, by that time I had quite a bit of playing experience, and I got up on stage one night. There were no amps; the amplifiers were *in the walls*. So imagine, you're standing in front of a huge wall, and behind you is just, I don't know, 50 or 100 ten- or twelve-inch speakers. And in front of you there's a little deck where you plug in. There are no amplifiers in sight. You would plug in, basically, to the wall, and this huge sound would come roaring out. It was a pretty creative idea—I've never seen it done again *[laughs]*, and I don't think I will!

But anyway, no one had to bring any equipment. That was the point: all you



brought was your guitar. And you plugged straight in, and you gathered a group of musicians—"In a half-hour I'm gonna…" and you had somebody [say], "Yeah, man, I'll play the drums," or "I'll play…" you know, you picked up whoever was there, and played, and demonstrated your wares for whoever was around. That's the way a lot of musicians met. I met most of the E Street Band there, and Southside Johnny. So it was a very pivotal place.

What was the Sunshine In like?

The Sunshine In was a huge, empty garage which had originally had been a Hullabaloo Club. When *Hullabaloo* was on television, they franchised the clubs and these clubs swept the nation—or at least the East Coast at that time—and every down-on-your-luck supermarket or parking garage become a Hullabaloo Club. The Hullabaloo Club was in a supermarket in Freehold. In Asbury Park it was in a big old parking garage. And basically they went in and put up a lot of black lights—which no one had ever seen then. I remember the first time my buddy and I went in at Asbury Park, we went in and our shirts lit up, we went, "…Whoa!" *[Laughs]* "Wow!… This is, like… This is special!"

The first band I saw in the Hullabaloo Club was Sonny and the Starfires—Sonny [Kenn] still plays in the area—and on the drums was "Mad Dog" Vincent Lopez. Sonny was this great R & B player: fabulous blonde hair, handsome guy, hair slicked back, just a stone-cold rocker. Just really something to see. And they were very big in the area at the time; to us, we thought they were gods.

After the Hullabaloo Clubs all, of course, tanked after two or three years or however long it took for that to run its course, then all of a sudden this place became the Sunshine In. Run by a guy I believe named *Mr. Fisher,* who was really strange and kind of funny—classic New Jersey small-town shyster. Once again, because I played, I became friends with everybody, and I saw quite a few acts there. They had quite a few national acts: Allman Brothers, Humble Pie, Black Sabbath…. I first saw Peter Wolf and the J. Geils Band there, and we opened for some of these acts from time to time.

I think we have a poster for you guys opening for Humble Pie.

Yeah, we opened for Humble Pie. That was usually with Steel Mill, and I had this band Dr. Zoom, we opened for somebody.

I was gonna ask about them, because it sounds like those shows were really interesting and different with the Monopoly players and all that.

It was just weird—I have no idea what it was about. We might have gotten the idea from, like, *Mad Dogs and Englishmen* or something at the time. But it was just this huge band of all local musicians. And the people we liked but who didn't play anything, we just found something for them to do, like play Monopoly, or some sort of stunt on stage. It was really just a result of boredom *[laughs]*. And people hanging around with nothing to do and no band at the time, I guess. It was fun. We had a big chorus, people's wives and girlfriends sang, and it was just an outgrowth of the little local scene.

We have a poster for a benefit you did for George McGovern in '72. Between seeing that and knowing what you did this year for Barack…

I started early! *[Laughs]*

I was going to say, did you always know rock 'n' roll was going to influence politics?

Yeah, even as early as those days. Because you forget, we were products of the '60s, and even as a young person, that brought with it a good deal of social consciousness even in Freehold, New Jersey, and in our little town. And so we searched for ways to be involved. I know we did a benefit to bus protesters to Washington to protest against the Vietnam War. We did the thing for McGovern. Here and there we just sort of found ways. And I wrote some political music back in those days with Steel Mill—it was very much a natural part of the rock 'n' roll scene.

We have the John Hammond audition tapes—what do you remember about those sessions?

Last of the old-school recording sessions: the people working were all in suits. I probably caught the very last of the '50s/'60s-style recording business. John would be there, and he always had a suit on, and the engineers and everybody else—my recollection, they were still dressed for work. It was very probably the last of the '60s style of recording sessions where you came in, and there's a mic set up, and you got in front of it, you played your songs, and played the piano. I listened to what John had to say, which was just general encouragement, and it happened in an evening, and that was it.

One of the other audio things we have is the audio from the show at the Harvard Square Theater, the one that Jon Landau ended up writing about…. Do you remember anything about that show?

I remember that Bonnie Raitt was kind enough to allow us to open up for her in those days, which we were (and remain) deeply thankful for. Because very few people would. It was hard to get on the bill with someone—we had a natural tendency to play longer than we should, and the band was very, very good. She was great, and Jackson Browne let me open up for him. We opened up for Sha Na Na; we opened up Brownsville Station, Black Oak Arkansas. We were on a lot of unusual

bills, just because they sent you wherever somebody would let you on. In those days there was no discernment between genre. You know, there wasn't a heavy metal show—everything was all mixed up together. We opened up for the Eagles one time. Mountain, Chambers Brothers... you did a lot of unusual gigs like that in the early days.

But the Harvard Square Theater, my main memory of it was that it was a really good show, people liked us a lot. I think we really shook the house down—it was just a good night. I didn't meet Jon that night; it was just a good night in Boston.

And we have the audio from the 1978 show at the Agora in Cleveland, which was WMMS's tenth anniversary. Since this is in Cleveland, maybe you'd want to talk about Cleveland and what it's meant to you, the support early on in your career.

There were places that were pockets of support. And my parents did a strange thing, which was they moved away from me in 1969 *[laughs]*. Usually you leave home—my parents left home! My sister and I remained in Freehold. My sister was 17 and just had a baby and married a local guy in Lakewood, and so she stayed behind. And I stayed behind for a couple of reasons. One is that I was financially independent at the time, to the tune of 20 or 30 bucks a week, which was all you needed in those days as a 19-year-old kid to live on. My parents had nothing. When they left for California, they had 3,000 dollars—every cent they had; they had all their stuff piled on top of the car (I might have sent you the picture; if not, I'll send it to you). They didn't have enough money to stay in motels when they crossed the country. They slept in the car very often. They literally slept a night in a motel and then a night or two in the car.

I tried to go out there at one time, and I couldn't make it. Once I got to California, my value was zero—I was worthless in California, because I had no reputation. But in New Jersey I could make that 20 dollars down at the Upstage on a Friday night, or the Student Prince, or someplace where it was just enough to get me by through the next week. We had the band, so we all lived together and pooled our resources for rent. And, at 19, I was independent, if that's what you could call it.

So we had certain places that supported us. In the beginning there was New Jersey, in this immediate area; and Richmond, Virginia, and that was with Steel Mill. We literally wouldn't have survived otherwise.

Then when the band started playing and touring—in the beginning, they don't pay you any money. Very often you play for free. So Cleveland became a place, because it was such a big rock 'n' roll town, where we developed an audience very early. Cleveland, Philadelphia... Texas, believe it or not: Austin, Houston.... There were a few cities where we developed strong early audiences, and Cleveland was a *big* one that kept us going for quite a few years.

The radio station WMMS really got behind you guys too.

Right, a lot of it had to do with the stations backing you. In Philadelphia, there was a guy called David Dye, he came down—it was in the strange days when a guy could come down from the radio station, just the DJ could come down. He could see you play to 15 or 20 people—nobody. You could *be* nobody, and that night on your way out of town you could turn on the radio and hear this guy play your record if he liked you. And the next time you came into town, there were 40 people there instead of 15. And so, the support of the old-school radio stations was enormous and incredibly important. It was where the band's live experience paid off. Because when we came into town initially, we played to nobody. *Nobody* came to see us—ten, 15 people. No one knew who you were. So when the DJs came down, and with the free format that still existed at that time, they went back and they began to play your records, then next time you came out there were more people there.

It was a very organic, grassroots growth that you were able to get going in those days. It was a combination of the bands' excellence in live performance and a system that could *respond* to that excellence. [These days], a guy could come down, love you, and say "You're great! I'll never *play* you, but you're fabulous." *[Laughs]* "You're never gonna get on the radio, but you're a genius!" I've heard people say it.

So it was a combination of a place in time when our power live was able to affect one person, who was then able to go out and affect his community through the ability to simply play your records on the air. It was a very different day and age. The music business was much smaller, there was no entertainment media, there was no entertainment culture, there was no coverage of rock music on television—very little, you had *American Bandstand,* and *Midnight Special* or something. It was still a novelty in your daily newspapers, major newspapers, it was still consigned to a little space. It was a very different kind of business. The upside was you had quite a bit of room to grow, experiment, and get your act to together before the big spotlight hit you—if it was ever going to.

One part of the exhibit is devoted to *Born to Run,* and I read in one of the books that you weren't that happy with the album when you first delivered it.

No, but I don't know if I would have been happy with anything, because I was just generally not that happy. My expectations—the sound I heard in my head was not one that was physically reproducible *[laughs]*. Of course, I wasn't aware of this at the time. I had no record-making knowledge. We had around us people who had *some*. The record probably wouldn't have gotten made without Jon Landau stepping in at the time, so that was enormous. Because we got stuck in the studio. I just worked on it for a long time, and I just couldn't hear it by the time it was done. I've had that happen with other records. Doesn't happen now, because we make them quickly. But in those days we made them very slow because I was hyperconscious, a very self-conscious young kid. I hadn't gotten used to hearing the sound of my own voice, so it disturbed me; I hadn't gotten used to the use of the studio to get the most out of it that I wanted.

But I'll tell you, the amazing thing was: hey, we made that *Born to Run*. That was us scrubbing away in 914 Studio up in Rye, NY. And it still sounds pretty good today. It was nice when they did the 30th anniversary [reissue] I sort of got to re-experience

it the way I should have when I was 24 or 25. And I was just like, whoa, yeah, this was really good!

What was it like when that album took off and you wound up on the cover of *Time* and *Newsweek* and all of that?

It was exciting... disturbing... sometimes enjoyable... horrifying... embarrassing... also, it was my dream come true.

It was so much more complicated than I thought it was going to be. I mean, when anybody imagines something wonderful, they only imagine the wonderful parts *[laughs]*. That's why you're imagining something wonderful! You only imagine the wonderful parts!

It's like if you see that girl walking down the street and you say, "Oh my god, life would be ecstasy if she was just my girlfriend." You're only thinking of the wonderful parts, you're not thinking... who knows. It's sort of like that. Success is like that girl: if only I had that, I wouldn't have a worry in the world. And then you get it, or you get in a relationship, and then you realize that there are some things I'm not good at, and there's some things she doesn't like, and she's telling me what she doesn't like about me.... And so all of a sudden you're in the real world where it's really happening, and it's a complicated experience.

I don't have any complaints, because I wouldn't have had it any other way, no matter what it was like, because that was what I had my sights set on, and I was just gonna push on through until I figured out what to do. Because I wanted to play, I wanted an audience, I was cocky enough to think I was something special—along with, of course, thinking you're a fraud and worthless, but that's part of the artistic experience *[laughs]*. I had both sides. I had the other thing too: Hey, I'm the greatest. And I want my audience, I deserve your ears!

Steve had a lot of fun with it, because of course it wasn't *him* on the cover. But it was the band, so he bought all the magazines and passed them out around the pool at the Sunset Marquis, and I ran upstairs to my room. There was a lot of tough stuff that went with it, and it's all sort of been talked about over the years. But for a young kid... success is hard for any young person. I feel for the young people today when I see them out struggling, whether it's Britney Spears or somebody; it takes an enormous leap of consciousness to handle yourself well under that kind of spotlight. And most kids don't have the guidance or the facility to be able to do that at 22 or 23 years old.

I only asked one guy about it, *ever*. I happened to be in L.A. in 1975, which was right when we were exploding, and Jack Nicholson came to the show. Jack Nicholson from Neptune, New Jersey, next door to Asbury Park. He came to the show, we spent some time after the show, and he had just become quite successful himself. So I said, you know, "What was the deal, what did you think about it?"

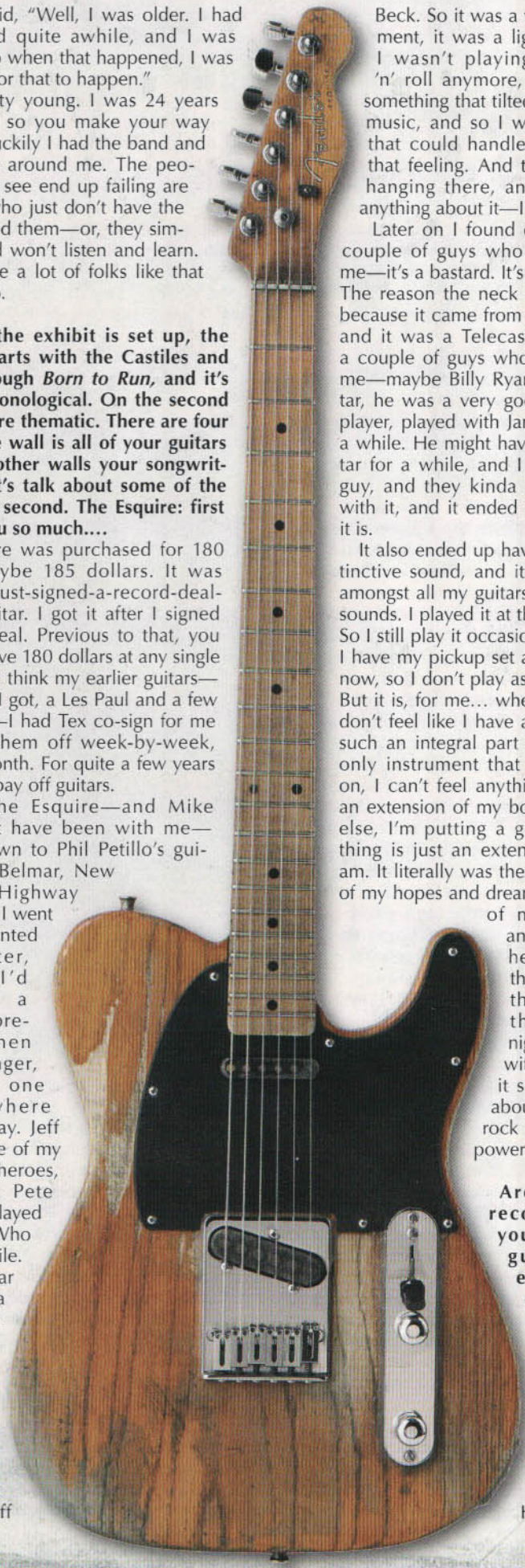
And he said, "Well, I was older. I had been around quite awhile, and I was older. And so when that happened, I was really ready for that to happen."

I was pretty young. I was 24 years old, 25, and so you make your way through it. Luckily I had the band and good people around me. The people who you see end up failing are the people who just don't have the people around them—or, they simply don't and won't listen and learn. And there are a lot of folks like that out there, too.

The way the exhibit is set up, the first floor starts with the Castiles and goes up through *Born to Run,* and it's basically chronological. On the second floor, it's more thematic. There are four walls, so one wall is all of your guitars and on the other walls your songwriting stuff. Let's talk about some of the guitars for a second. The Esquire: first off, thank you so much....

The Esquire was purchased for 180 dollars—maybe 185 dollars. It was my official just-signed-a-record-deal-you-get-a-guitar. I got it after I signed my record deal. Previous to that, you would not have 180 dollars at any single moment. So I think my earlier guitars—good guitars I got, a Les Paul and a few other things—I had Tex co-sign for me and I paid them off week-by-week, month-by-month. For quite a few years all I did was pay off guitars.

But for the Esquire—and Mike Appel might have been with me—we went down to Phil Petillo's guitar shop in Belmar, New Jersey, on Highway 34, I believe. I went in, and I wanted a Telecaster, because I'd played a Telecaster previously when I was younger, I'd picked one up somewhere along the way. Jeff Beck was one of my great guitar heroes, and I think Pete Townshend played one in The Who also for a while. It was a guitar that was a good mixture for playing soul music, a la Steve Cropper and James Burton, and also good for rock music like Jeff Beck. So it was a versatile instrument, it was a light instrument. I wasn't playing heavy rock 'n' roll anymore, I was playing something that tilted closer to soul music, and so I wanted a guitar that could handle the funk and that feeling. And that guitar was hanging there, and I didn't ask anything about it—I just bought it.



Later on I found out—I knew a couple of guys who had it before me—it's a bastard. It's not one guitar. The reason the neck says *Esquire* is because it came from another guitar, and it was a Telecaster body. And a couple of guys who had it before me—maybe Billy Ryan had that guitar, he was a very good local guitar player, played with James Cotton for a while. He might have had that guitar for a while, and I know another guy, and they kinda futzed around with it, and it ended up being what it is.

It also ended up having a very distinctive sound, and it still is unique amongst all my guitars for the way it sounds. I played it at the Super Bowl. So I still play it occasionally on stage. I have my pickup set a little different now, so I don't play as often as I did. But it is, for me... when I put it on, I don't feel like I have a guitar on. It's such an integral part of me. It's the only instrument that when I put it on, I can't feel anything on me. It's an extension of my body. Everything else, I'm putting a guitar on. That thing is just an extension of who I am. It literally was the receptor of all of my hopes and dreams, the symbol of my ambitions and desires. I've held it aloft to the audience on thousands and thousands of nights, I suppose with the idea that it says something about the power of rock 'n' roll and the power of us.

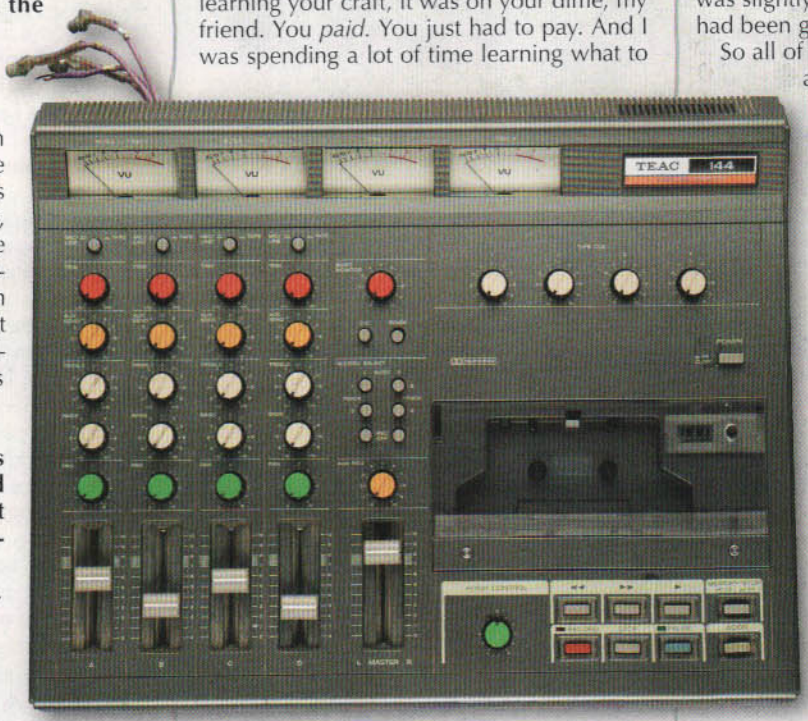
Are there any recordings that you think that guitar is an essential part of?

I would say "Kitty's Back," I played that lead on "Kitty's Back" on it. All of the stuff from the Hammersmith

Odeon, the guitar sounded *so good* on that, at that show that we put out with the *Born to Run* [30th Anniversary] package. It's just very distinctive—and I had a couple of great Fender amplifiers, old Bassmans that I used, also. It was just a very warm, very old-school sound, and yet I was able to get clean funk and country playing like James Burton out of it, along with Jeff Beck-style leads.

I was going to ask you about the amps—we have two Fender Bassmans that you sent us. And one has four Fender ten-inch speakers, and the other has four Jensen ten-inchers. Any stories behind those two amps? Were they used in the studio or touring?

I don't remember—generally those Bassmans, what I used to do is wire them together and play them in stereo on either side of the drum kit. If somebody finds old photos of our stage setup, they may find two of those out there. As far as the speaker setups, you just blew them up and other ones were put in—whatever were considered to be the good speakers of the day, I suppose.



Another thing we have is the tape machine you used for *Nebraska*. Do you want to talk about those sessions?

They were pretty basic. What happened was, I got tired of spending every single penny I had making records. In 1980 when we went to go on the River tour, I was just broke. After almost 10 years in the music business I had about 20 grand to my name. And this was after million-selling records and the cover of *Time* and *Newsweek*.

Now, I had gotten into a lot of trouble and made some bad deals and had to hire a lot of lawyers. And then nobody in the band had ever paid any taxes, because nobody in *New Jersey* pays any taxes *[laughs]*. At least, not amongst our crowd. I didn't know anyone who paid taxes—I didn't know anyone who had an honest job, barely. And if they *did* have a job, they were taking the money under the table. This is how everyone lived here. As a matter of fact, some of the guys who first worked for me out of New Jersey were shocked when I said that we had to pay taxes. It was like, "Hey, you trying to scam me man?" *[Laughs]* "You're ripping me off!"

So it was a bizarre thing, I believe some enterprising young man at the IRS must have looked at the *Time* and *Newsweek* covers and asked, "Who is this guy?" And when they looked into it: "I don't know who he is, but I know one thing: he isn't paying any taxes." And so we got chased after for an enormous amount of back taxes, not one cent of which had ever been paid. So between 1974 and 1980, I paid lawyers, the tax man, tried to keep the band afloat (which I barely could), and spent money in the recording studio. The result being, in 1980, I had no money after playing for quite a while in the professional music business. And so when I came back from the River tour, it was the first time I had a little money in the bank, and I said, this time I'm not gonna go in and break myself again. Because the record company paid up to a certain point, but after that if you were scrubbing away in the studio learning your craft, it was on your dime, my friend. You *paid*. You just had to pay. And I was spending a lot of time learning what to do in the studio. An enormous amount: the *River* record went on for a year or two.

So I told my roadie, go out and get me some little tape player. I don't care what you get, just get me a little tape player I can sing some songs into and throw another track on, and I can tell if I have anything before I waste time and money in the studio with the band. So he came back with a little four track Teac. Set it up in my bedroom, exactly five minutes from here, right up the road. And I sat down, and in about three days I sang all the songs from *Nebraska*. I had them written, and I think there were maybe two or three takes of each; I think there's one take of "Highway Patrolman" or something, not much.

You actually could mix—you recorded to a cassette, four track to a cassette, and then you mixed it to another cassette. I mixed it through a Gibson Echoplex, which is the sound of the echo on that record—just a separate unit, an old '60s guitar Gibson Echoplex unit—onto another boombox. So the final mix came off, like, the boombox you would take to the beach.

Now the problem is, all those boomboxes are not finely honed recording equipment *[laughs]*. They're meant to suck in the sand and keep playing! Consequently, the speed of them are all different. In those days, your cassette was being played at a variety of speeds that the artists never intended. So I did the whole record, carried it around, went into the studio, blah blah blah, tried to get the band to play it, didn't sound right; tried to play again it myself, recorded it all myself, didn't sound right; tried to take the tracks that we did and remix them, didn't sound right. The better it got, the worse it got. And I also realized the tape... the sound we were hearing back was slightly slowed down, because the tape had been going slightly fast.

So all of these strange accidents occurred and [combined with] this junky equipment at the time to unintentionally make this very lo-fi, spooky... I mean, I knew the mood I was going after, but a lot of it was just an accident. I was just trying to hear some songs I had written.

Another section of the second floor is about your songwriting. One of the things we have is that table you sent us, where you said you've written most of your songs.

I think I sent you the chair too? Yeah, I've written at that table since the '70s. Many, many songs have come across that table, starting with maybe the *Darkness on the Edge of Town* record. I bought it with Anthony Rioli, who was a local antique dealer and general wild man. I had a little house, and I was looking for something to write on, and we found that somewhere. But I've kept it ever since, and I think I've written as late as... was there anything from *Magic* written on there? Certainly *The Rising* was written there.

In general, what is your songwriting process like?

It's very relaxed. You just get an idea, and I sit down with a guitar, and it's a meditative state. Songwriting is fundamentally a meditation. It's the exercise of your craft, your intelligence. But it's primarily meditative, in that it works best when you go into a light trance-like situation. Where you just sort of start to... you're scraping the top of your subconscious, like with a knife. And the shavings, sometimes they turn into a song *[laughs]*. And then occasionally, the knife plummets deeply in.

It would be like having a shapeless piece of clay or something in front of you, and you just start running your fingers over it. You're just sitting there with clay. You don't have an idea of what that clay is going to be yet, you just start running your fingers over

the clay. And as you're running your fingers over the clay, your emotions, who you are, the issues that are on your mind, the sounds you may want to hear, the shapes you may want to hear, the shapes you may want to see, your relationship to the world itself begins to define itself in the images, music, and lyrics that are just kind of flowing out of you.

Then there's a point where your studied craft comes into play. In other words: okay, you've plummeted a certain amount, you've got your basic story, you've plummeted into some of your unconscious and you've come up with something that feels like life. It feels like it has some breath and some blood in it. But now you've got to call on your craft to refine it, to write well, to make good choruses, or verses.

And so your craft comes in, but you're still listening. The main thing you're doing if you have your clay in front of you, you're seeing all the time. What is assisting you in moving forward? Your eyes: you're seeing, you're seeing. If you're a musician, what is assisting you in moving forward with a song? Your ears. Every time you strum the chord, you're listening. What is the song telling you? What is the character telling you about his fate? And if you listen hard enough, and if you yourself are a seeker—in other words, your motivation is that you are in search of whatever it is you might want to call it: truth, experience, reflection of the world as it is, you want to sing your blues away, you want to sing about your gal, your friends your town, your country, your day at the beach, whatever it feels like—these things come forth and begin to sort of give shape and refinement to your thoughts and emotions.

So it's a magic act. Basically, you're in the process of... nothing exists in this room when I walk in, and you literally pull something from thin air and give it physical properties, and by the end someone out in the world holds it in their hand. You've taken something, you've literally, *boom,* you know, zoom, there it is. Abracadabra. But it begins in the air. It begins as ideas and emotions, and it begins as something that has no physical property whatsoever.

So it's a lot of *fun* to do, and I get great excitement, exhilaration, enjoyment out of it—and of course, occasionally it's very, very frustrating. In the old days your percentage is about 95 percent failure to about five percent success. But hey, if part of your five percent success is "Born in the U.S.A." or "Born to Run," once those things are there, you forget about the 95. It's like coming home from the dentist: you forget about the pain, and you're happy about how good your teeth look *[laughs].* It's the same thing. It's like, once it's played, all you're thinking about is *wow, that was great.*

Do you just start with the music first? Or the words? Or is it a combination?

I don't have any rules. The only record I started words-first was my first record, because I imagined myself as being some sort of poet at the time. I would sit there with a rhyming dictionary or just by myself and just pour forth with whatever the images were in my head. Later on, almost immediately—and even on that record—the music is so evocative that you use it.

Like on this record, *Working on a Dream,* I had a very specific idea of what I wanted the music on the record to be like. I wanted a very big, orchestral kind of rock music.

Your inner world is a mine, and there are many, many different veins. And if you work one vein a lot, it may go dry. *The Ghost of Tom Joad* and *Devils & Dust,* okay, I don't have any more of these songs in me right now. But then you may, if you turn around and your eyes are open so you can see, you may go *oh, what's that over there?* Chip chip, boom, a vein of a certain kind of music may come bursting forth and music will pour out of you. The minute you finish a record, sometimes.

This was something I didn't allow myself to do in the early days. I only looked at one vein—the vein I was very concerned about defining myself with—and ignored everything else. And that's what's on *Tracks;* I ignored a lot of good music! But now I don't do that. Now, I'm open to whatever feels like it's going to come through my creative system at a given moment. So at the end of *Magic:* wow, "Girls in Their Summer Clothes," that was fun. I like that big production style, I haven't done that in a long, long time. That brings you to come up with another song. And then you go home that night and think, man, I'd really like to make something big, and rich, and romantic, but that carries with it the concerns of somebody at my age. Innocent and kind of knowing at the same time. And take that sound—the sound of which is basically the sound of innocence in those days of the Beach Boys and [Phil] Spector—and take that sound and combine it with my 60 years of experience on the plant Earth. And so you have *Working on a Dream.*

"Outlaw Pete"—people said I was ripping of a Kiss song, actually I thought I was ripping off [Van Dyke Parks and Brian Wilson's] "Heroes and Villains" *[laughs].* There was a vein that just comes rushing out. And these days I'm able to listen to it, and work on it, and I'm able to get more music to my fans.

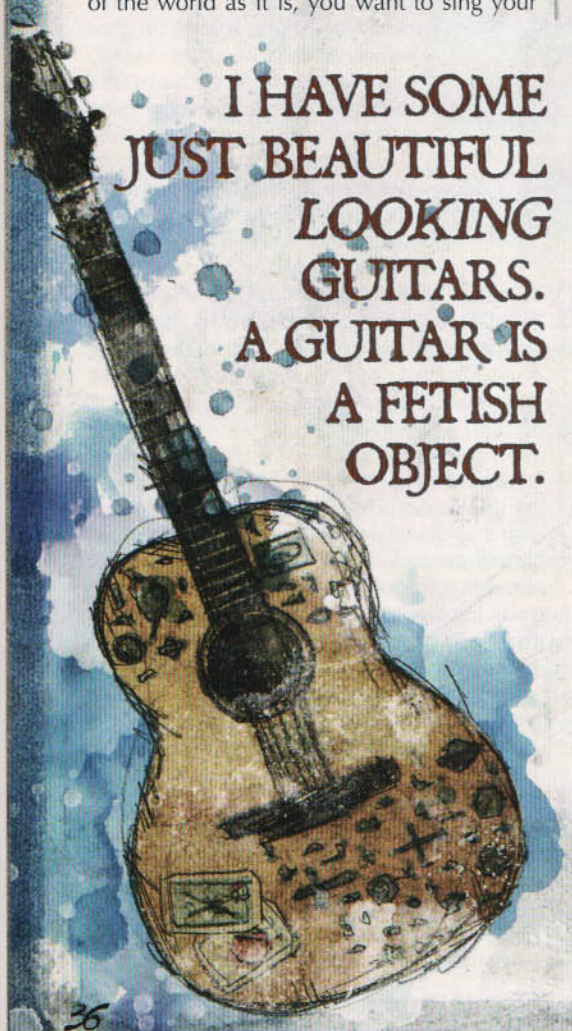
Is there one guitar you normally use to write with?

Nope. I pick up anything that is around. If I have something nice around—I have some just beautiful-*looking* guitars. A guitar is a fetish object. That's why people love them, that's why they're used in fashion ads—they're fetish objects. The design of the guitar is incredible. I mean, they're shaped like women, number one; and they look like circus implements *[laughs].* They may be sparkly, they may be metal flaked, but they're beautiful things simply to look upon. So a guitar can be inspiring, just picking it up and feeling the wood and smelling it. The smell of a guitar is a wonderful thing: put your nose to the strings and smell the inside, the wood. It's a very... dreaming sort of object. So I have a few nice ones in my room. But otherwise, I'll just pick up anything that's around, whatever happens to be available. And if you're gonna write, you're gonna write.

We also have a lot of your songwriting notebooks, and I noticed that you filled them up from cover to cover, and that there'll be several drafts of one song.

Sure. I did a lot of rewriting; I suppose I still do a reasonable amount. Probably less than I did at the time, because at the time I was trying to shape who I was and what I wanted to be about, and what I wanted to write about, and how I wanted the world to see me, and how I wanted to see myself. And also, the kind of writing I was interested in doing, which was using very classic rock 'n' roll archetypes—cars, girls, Saturday night, the job, the end of the day, all things that had long been written about in popular music and blues music—you're either going to turn them into something that are archetypes or clichés. And so, you start out usually with clichés. And I did a lot of shaving away to turn them into something more than that, to turn them into sort of classic images that I was able to use to express my own life experience.

So in the beginning, I knew enough to



go, *if I get this wrong, it isn't going to be any good.* And so on *Born to Run*, I took a lot of time trying to find that place, trying to find *me* in those images, me and my world, the world in 1974 post-Vietnam America.

And okay, if Brian Wilson was... "Racing in the Street" I always thought was like a sequel to "Don't Worry Baby." You put ten to 15 years on the guy in "Don't Worry Baby," and he's the guy in "Racing in the Street."

That was how I was thinking about things, and so there was a good amount of rewriting. Those were the days I'd second-guess, third-guess, fourth-guess, fifth-guess and sixth-guess my self constantly, until I got exhausted and then finally decide on something and put it out.

It seems like there are a lot of drafts from the *Born in the U.S.A.* period, too.

There were just a lot of drafts from a lot of the stuff. *Born in the U.S.A.*, I wrote I don't know how many songs for that record. Many, many, many. Look at the outtakes that are on *Tracks*, and that's probably just a part of them. I did a lot of writing before I felt comfortable putting something out.

So one of the other sections of the exhibit focuses on your tours, and one of the things I like is the set of the hotel room keys from one of the early tours.

Yeah, I wanted to remember where I'd been. And so what I started to do was just keep the keys. And I had a piece of rawhide or something, and as we traveled I'd just slip each key on that piece of rawhide. And in those days you either stayed in a Holiday Inn—that was when we hit it *big*. When we knew we were going to a Holiday Inn, we were like "Oh thank God, we will sleep well tonight!" But there were a lot of [others]... they gave you a key on a big piece of plastic that said the town, the city, the hotel. And I just started to keep them, just as a way of knowing, like, I've been here, I've been there, I've been everywhere *[laughs]*.

It's funny, Tim Schmit of the Eagles, one of the things he gave us—he did the same thing on one of the tours, and his are just thrown in like a gym bag or whatever. It's in the L.A. section where we have stuff for the Eagles.

It was a reminder that you were *somewhere*. That you've been someplace. It's such a rootless existence, it's so transitory, you're moving around so much.

We have the keys to various cities like Youngstown and Freehold. How does it feel to be awarded those things?

I don't put a lot of stock in it *[laughs]*. It's kind of nice, it's okay, people come out to the show and come backstage and say, "Here's the key to the city, my friend!" And you go, "Thank you, sir, thank you!"

I always just thought that it meant that any time when you truly fucked it up badly and screwed everything up in your life, that you could then come back to that city, and you have the *key* to that city. So you will then be able to eat, survive, and somehow be accepted at your lowest. I don't think that's what they actually mean, but that was my fantasy. My fantasy was once you got

the key to the city, son, you've always have a home; no matter how the world treats you or how terrible things may get, or how badly you may screw up your entire life, you can always come back to Freehold or Youngstown, Ohio, and someone will buy you a beer here. I'm not sure if that's what it means, but that was always kind of my take on it.

We also have the Blistex Beautiful Lips award, too.

That's incredible *[laughs]*.

In terms of people coming to the exhibit, is there anything you hope people take away from it?

Generally, because I'm really not its creator—I guess that's you guys—my take on it is that you're providing people who've been interested in your work a little extra information about where you come from. I was always interested in, like, gee, I'd like to see Elvis's shoe rack *[laughs]*. "Is that Elvis's shoe rack? Is that *really* Elvis's shoe rack?' It's like, "Man, I saw Elvis's shoe rack!"

So, its fun to go see, like, Elvis's Cadillac. I went to the Country Hall of Fame and they had, I forget who has the Cadillac with all the sliver dollars in it. They're just funny totems of people lives, and it gives you a little more of a tactile sense... you know, I think the hardest thing to believe when you're a rock fan is that these things are real. In other words, I will occasionally run into someone from some gorgeous part of the globe—Stockholm, Paris, Barcelona—who tell me they just came back from a wonderful vacation in Asbury Park, New Jersey *[laughs]*. And not only that, but while they were there they saw Freehold. And I always go, "Whoa, you're telling me that you had two weeks off and you spent it..." you know *[laughs]*. It's funny in a sense, but I understand it also, because I've driven through Memphis. I've driven past Sun Studios. I just wanted to know it was there, that it was real. That all of that stuff *really happened*. That there was a moment and a place in time when some kid stood in that room, that tiny little room right there. That room has its physical properties—it's only x by x wide, it's got these four walls, it's an actual place on earth—and something otherworldly occurred, something that touched me so fundamentally in my soul that it changed my life, and it came out of this actual place. And if it came out of this actual place, that means that where *I* am is real, too, and who knows what can come out of *my* town.

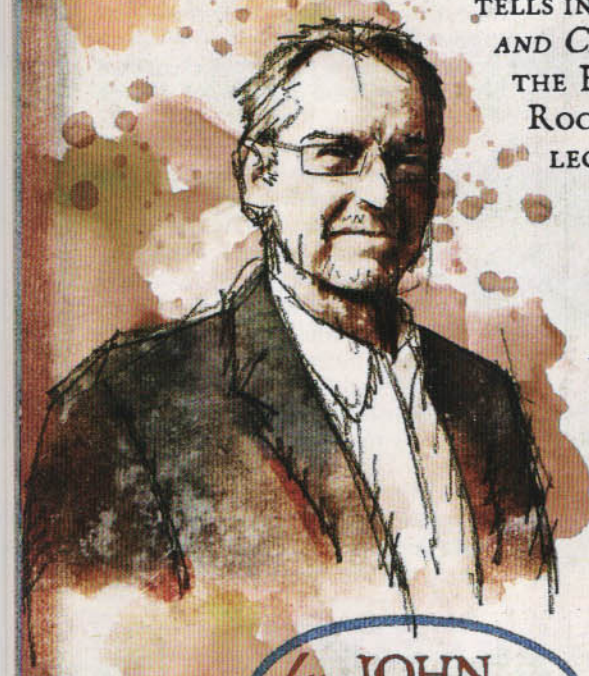
So I think that the *things*, if they have any value whatsoever beyond pure curiosity items, are tangible evidence that the things that meant a lot to you—the people, the group of musicians—have a town just like yours. And it's still there. It's still physically there, you can drive through it, you can put your feet on its streets. And there's something about that, because I meet a lot of people who do make their pilgrimages for one reason or another to this place or another. So the *stuff* is important in that sense.

Like I said, I was never much of a collector. I have a few things from other artists that were gifts that mean a lot to me, but I don't have much. But they are talismans. They're talismans of the connection between the emotional world—the world of people's dreams, hopes, fears, desires ambitions—and the real physical world, the one that we live in and we drive though in a very mundane way on a daily basis. There's something about that physical-ness of things that a) it's fun to see, but b) it also brings it into the realm of the real for your fan.

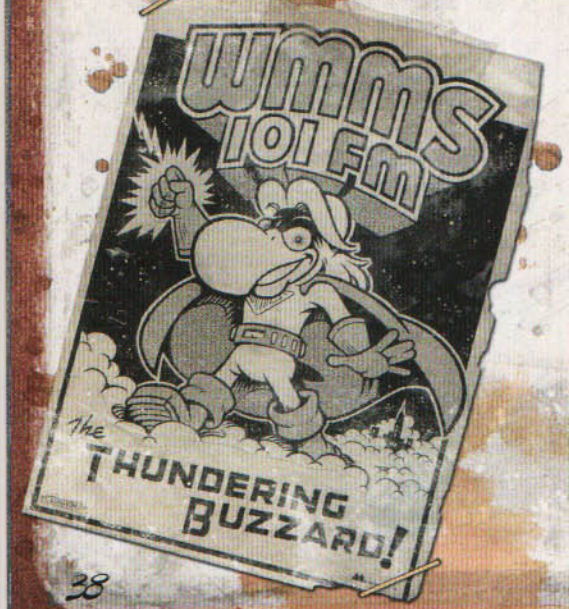
If I see one of Elvis's guitars, or one of Roy Orbison's... "Wow. There it is." That's part of the magic trick, right? That's the magician's tools. And those things... if somebody did a nice magic trick, those things are always fun to see and be around.

the BUZZARD and the BOSS

It was a long way from opening for Wishbone Ash at Cleveland's Allen Theatre to being inducted into the city's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame some 25 years later—and honored with his own exhibit ten years after that. In the '70s, C-Town was integral to making it all happen for Bruce Springsteen. John Gorman was program director at WMMS during those crucial years, and it's part of the story he tells in his book *The Buzzard: Inside the Glory Days of WMMS and Cleveland Rock Radio*. This chapter, "The Buzzard and the Boss," gives an insider's look at Springsteen's rise in the Rock 'n' Roll Capital of the World, climaxing with the legendary 1978 broadcast from the Agora.



by JOHN GORMAN



No recording artist was more closely associated with WMMS than Bruce Springsteen—especially after he played our tenth anniversary concert in 1978. And probably no one at the station was more identified with Springsteen than Kid Leo.

It wasn't a case of love at first listen. Leo's tastes were eclectic, but he did have quirks. When Culture Club's first album came out in 1982, for example, Leo didn't want to play it because he was concerned about Boy George's cross-dressing. He felt our audience would react negatively to his style—even though David Bowie, in his pre–Ziggy Stardust phase more than a decade earlier, looked like Lauren Bacall, and there were many other gender-bending artists in the seventies, including the New York Dolls. "Leo," I finally said, "this guy sounds like Smokey Robinson. How can we go wrong?" Though nearly all album rock stations were scared off by Boy George's image, it was good music for its time, and Leo agreed.

He had similar reservations when Madonna's "Borderline" single was released in 1983. It arrived as a twelve-inch disc, in a package that opened into a poster of Madonna. She was a bit blurred, like Dylan on the cover of *Blonde on Blonde*, and Leo was convinced she had an Adam's apple and was a transvestite. He was sure we'd be laughed at for playing the artist. When he was assured that Madonna was a woman, his opinion on her music changed.

It took Leo longer to pick up on Springsteen, whose first albums—*Greetings From Asbury Park, N.J.* and *The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle*—sold poorly and received little play on WMMS after they were released in 1973. Denny Sanders, David Spero, and Matt the Cat were early boosters who liked and played a few tracks, but Leo was still heavily into hard rock and "glitter band" artists from Britain—Bowie, T.Rex, Sparks, and Mott the Hoople—as well as their American counterparts the New York Dolls and lesser-known hard rock acts like the Heavy Metal Kids and Hawkwind. Springsteen was being called "the new Dylan," and Leo thought he was working too hard to fit the part. And Leo didn't like Dylan.

Excerpted from the book, *The Buzzard: Inside the Glory Days of WMMS and Cleveland Rock Radio* © 2007 by John Gorman. Reprinted with permission of Gray & Co., Publishers. *The Buzzard* (paperback / $14.95) is available online at amazon.com.

Springsteen was, unquestionably, working hard. Though his record sales were weak enough to concern Columbia, his relentless touring was making him a darling of critics and starting to bring him an audience beyond the Northeast and the Jersey shore—especially in northeast Ohio. When he played his first show in the area, opening for Black Oak Arkansas at Kent State University in January 1974, he made such an impression that *Scene* gave him his first magazine cover anywhere—although they panned his Cleveland opening appearance for Wishbone Ash the next month.

Springsteen's next Cleveland date was a WMMS Night Out at the Agora, four months later on June 3, 1974. The club was a little over half full, with a smattering of college students from the Jersey Shore and Philadelphia. (That show, which has appeared on numerous bootleg CDs and sites, is often listed as taking place in February, because of a show that was canceled.) Despite an offer from Columbia Records to be their guest at the show, Kid Leo had no interest in attending. Springsteen played just short of two hours that night, and the concert was edited to fifty minutes for its Wednesday night broadcast on WMMS.

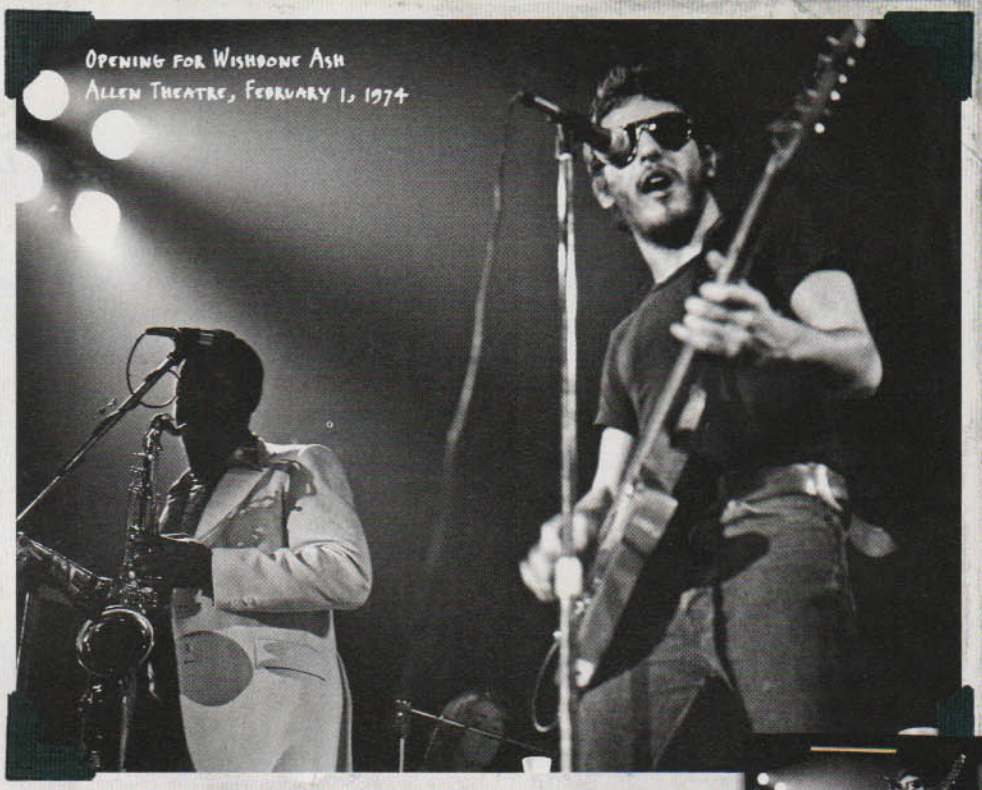
For Leo, and Springsteen, *Born to Run* made all the difference.

Rich Kudolla, the branch manager of Columbia Records in Cleveland, visited WMMS a few months after the Agora show to play an early version of the record for Leo, Denny, and me. It featured double-tracking of Springsteen's voice and was backed by full orchestration. We were impressed. Leo felt the song captured the essence of Phil Spector's "Wall of Sound," and didn't sound like that "fuckin' Bob Dylan." The only downside was a slight hiss on the recording. Kudolla let us keep the tape and gave us approval to play it. Springsteen was still a virtual unknown in Cleveland, so any exposure WMMS gave his music could only be positive.

Kudolla returned a week or two later with a cleaner copy of "Born to Run" without the hiss and minus the double-tracked vocal and massive orchestration. A better take, it became the version we used on the air, and the one Springsteen selected for the album, which was still months from release. The song took on a life of its own, so much that it became the official lead-in to Murray Saul's Friday Get Down. We revisited Springsteen's first two albums, with Leo now playing a cut from one of them daily, and their airplay on WMMS translated into sales. Both showed up on legitimate top twenty album lists in Cleveland, Akron, and Canton.

Springsteen's next Cleveland appearance, on February 18, 1975, was at the John Carroll University gym in University Heights. Co-sponsored by us, it was booked by Tim Russert—the host of NBC's *Meet the Press*, who graduated from John Carroll in 1972, and was president of its University Club while attending law school in Cleveland afterward. He had booked a number of concerts in college and agreed to help this time because he could use the money for law school. Russert suggested Springsteen, got him for $2,500, and worked with fellow fraternity members as a roadie—setting up the stage and the band's equipment, and working security.

I had to hand it to Columbia. If their plan was to establish Springsteen's first two albums only months before his third, it worked. Besides playing his previous albums, we started building a library of such unreleased tracks as "Thundercrack," a live performance recorded at a club in Philadelphia by WMMR, the first station in the country to play Springsteen. Like Michael Stanley in Cleveland, Springsteen had already achieved superstar status along the Jersey Shore and his influence and popularity continued to grow further south to Philadelphia. WMMS got a lot of credit later, because of our reputation for breaking new music, but most of our early unreleased Springsteen material came from influential WMMR announcer Ed Sciaky. He was Springsteen's original cham-

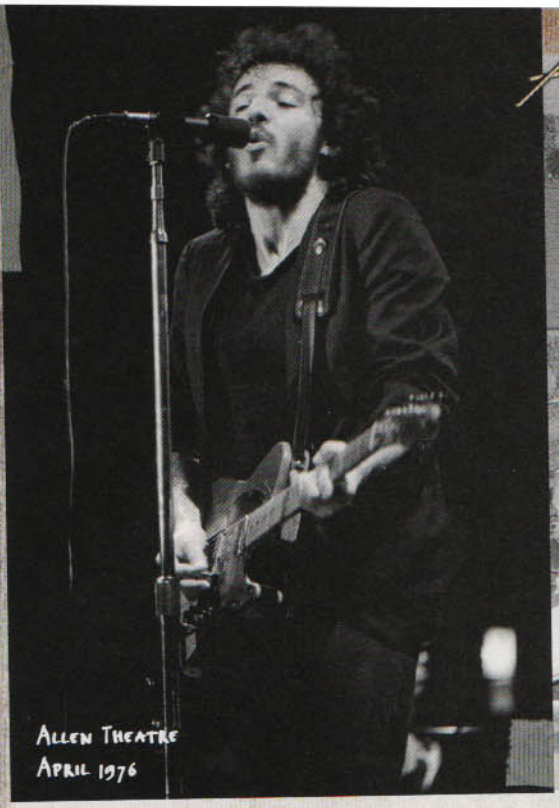


Opening for Wishbone Ash
Allen Theatre, February 1, 1974

JANET MACOSKA PHOTOS

Kid Leo and John Gorman in the WMMS on-air studio

FROM THE BOOK *THE BUZZARD* BY JOHN GORMAN; PHOTO FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION



Allen Theatre
April 1976

JANET MACOSKA PHOTO

Southside Johnny visits the WMMS production room, listening back to station IDs he cut.

FROM THE BOOK *THE BUZZARD* BY JOHN GORMAN; PHOTO BY ANASTASIA PANTSIOS

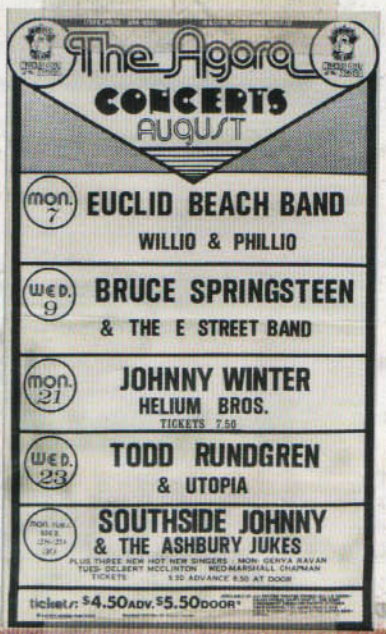
pion, even prior to his first Columbia release, and he became a source and friend to us.

Another unreleased track was "The Fever," which became a hit although it hadn't been officially released to the public. Charlie Kendall, our music director and morning man in 1975, was leaked a version notably different from Springsteen's. The artist was listed as "Southside Johnny," with no other information. Leo didn't like it, preferring the Springsteen version, but Kendall championed the tune—playing against Leo for listeners—and also fueled rumors that Johnny might be Springsteen in disguise. It was the kind of thing you do if you're a popular culture radio station, and even better when you are trying to build morning and afternoon drive ratings. Feuds can be good. Within days, we learned there really was a Southside Johnny Lyon, and that his Asbury Jukes were another popular band along the Jersey Shore. Springsteen occasionally joined them on stage at the Stone Poney, the Asbury Park club where he got his start, and the band's cofounder was Miami Steve Van Zandt, before he joined the E Street Band. Their first album was a masterpiece of blue-eyed soul, and a perfect fit for us. After Kendall left WMMS, Jeff Kinzbach assumed "ownership" of Southside Johnny along with the morning show. But Leo, knowing that Southside essentially had Springsteen's endorsement, also got behind him in a bigger way and because of his Springsteen connection, Leo became synonymous with Southside Johnny as much as with Springsteen.

All of it worked for Springsteen. By the time *Born to Run* was released, he was a superstar in Cleveland. The album quickly jumped to number three on the national chart, and it was the top seller in every record store locally. Most ran out of inventory, which was another plus for WMMS; we were the main station playing it, and listeners knew they wouldn't have to wait longer than an hour to hear a cut. In August 1975, Springsteen played triumphant shows at the Akron Civic Theater and Allen Theatre. In October, he appeared simultaneously on the covers of *Newsweek*, whose story quoted Denny Sanders, and *Time*, which proclaimed him "Rock's New Sensation." Over the next year and a half, he returned for four engagements in Northeast Ohio—of which two were at the Allen, and one, finally, at the Coliseum.

Clevelanders loved him, and Leo became the surrogate who expressed their passionate appreciation and spoke to the man directly. Springsteen returned the affection, giving Cleveland attention on a par with Philadelphia and New York. He visited WMMS only once—before his April 1976 shows at the Allen, for an interview with Leo in which it was hard to tell which of them was more nervous—but he obviously spent time listening. He knew the station, and he either fit right in or was a better actor than anybody dreamed. We couldn't have created a better artist to represent what WMMS stood for.

Even then, however, Springsteen's position was precarious when *Darkness on the Edge of Town* was released, in June 1978, because of a royalty dispute with his former manager. His success was built on his live shows, but record labels still considered annual album releases the norm. *Darkness* was Springsteen's first in almost three years. Columbia wanted to use it to reignite his career, or ignite it where he hadn't yet broken big. They suggested a series of free concerts, broadcast from key markets on ad hoc regional radio networks. Cleveland, where Springsteen was well established, was not among them. The label suggested doing the Midwest show in Detroit and wanted WMMS and other stations to simulcast it.



Steve Popovich and others at the label insisted that Springsteen do Cleveland and the Agora, which he believed was the best rock and roll club in America. Fortunately, it turned out to be an easy sell. Everyone in the Springsteen camp wanted the deal, too. The tie-in would be WMMS's tenth anniversary, the Agora would be the venue, and we would broadcast the show regionally.

The tenth anniversary tie-in was a natural, even though the anniversary itself was somewhat artificial. It marked the change of call letters from WHK-FM to WMMS, which came six weeks after the original progressive format was installed in August 1968, and it overlooked the fact that WMMS had other formats in its early years. To me, it was a useful marketing and promotional tool—a way of celebrating our past and presenting an image locked to a long future. It worked, locally and nationally, bringing a cover story in the *Plain Dealer's Sunday Magazine*, a commemorative edition of *Scene* magazine, a special supplement in the national trade magazine *Record World*, and coverage in other trades including *Radio & Records* and *Billboard*. A week rarely went by without stories about WMMS in national trade magazines.

But nothing matched the Springsteen show. It was set for Wednesday, August 9, 1978, and we drew postcards from listeners to give away

CONTINUED ON P. 43

FROM THE BOOK *THE LIGHT IN DARKNESS* (WWW.THELIGHTINDARKNESS.COM)

Cleveland Boys! A Little Party Noise!

Classic radio broadcasts, unique guest spots, sold-out multiple-night stands, and a touch of musical activism — Cleveland concertgoers have seen it all.

Cleveland fans have prided themselves their city's long and rich relationship with Springsteen since the '70s, when DJ Kid Leo of WMMS was instrumental in turning Cleveland into one of Bruce's first real "homes away from home." Kid Leo's tradition of kicking off the weekend by closing his radio show every Friday evening with "Born to Run" continued until he retired in 1988. Bruce could be quite socially accessible to fans in the early days; one particular group of local fans, as lucky as they were devoted, met up and hung out with the band on a couple of occasions. Bruce has made a point to acknowledge the "Cleveland Boys" from the stage ever since. And it may go without saying, but whenever Bruce goes on the road, a stop or two in Cleveland has always been a foregone conclusion.

Epic early performances at the Allen Theatre and Agora were immortalized in radio broadcasts and the inevitable bootlegs that followed. When the legendary Darkness on the Edge of Town tour finally pulled to a halt, some five months after the Agora '78 broadcast, it was for a two-night stand at the 20,000-capacity Richfield Coliseum. On New Years Eve, right before midnight, an overexcited fan threw a firecracker that exploded in Bruce's face, prompting a rare moment of anger and making for an awkward and tense intermission. But with characteristic drive, Bruce was soon back in form, exorcizing the bad vibes by attacking the remainder of the show—and the following New Years Day 1979 tour finale—with ferocious intensity.

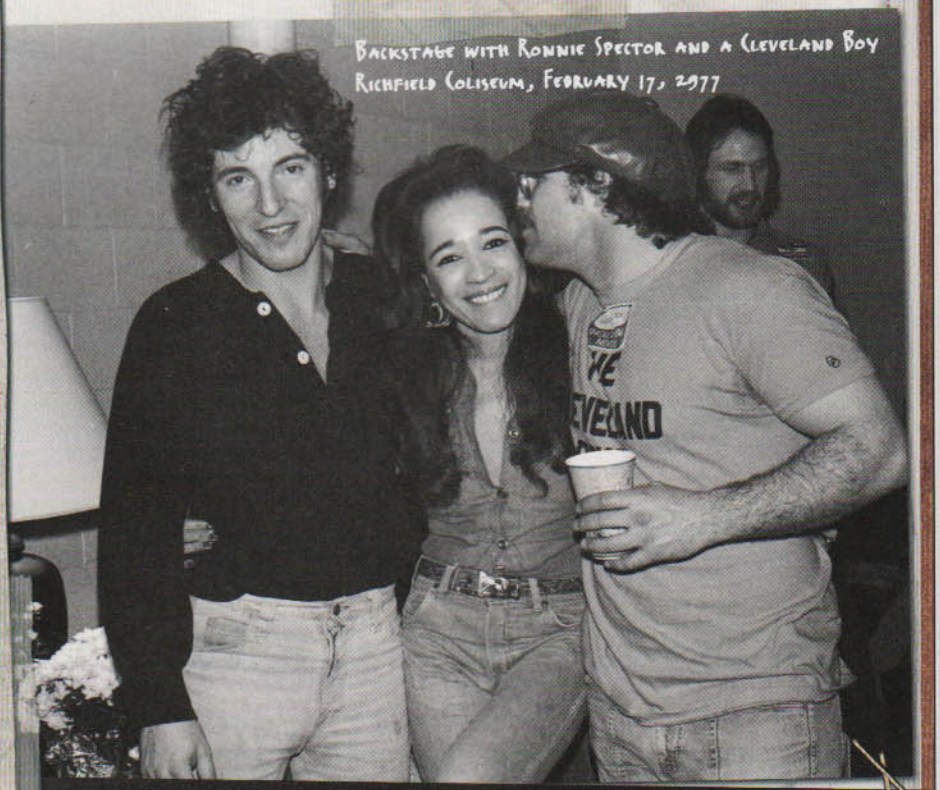
Some of the most memorable live moments in Cleveland have come in collaboration with other artists. In 1977, Ronnie Spector joined the band to sing lead on three of her own songs, plus Billy Joel's "Say Goodbye to Hollywood." After playing a three-hour show of his own at the Richfield Coliseum in late August of '78—yet another Darkness tour stop in Cleveland—Bruce jumped onstage at the Agora with Southside Johnny to guest on three songs, including fan favorite "The Fever." Southside returned the favor in 1981, joining the E Street Band at both of their triumphant summer shows at Richfield Coliseum for rare performances of "I Don't Wanna Go Home."

In 1995, the opening of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Museum secured Cleveland's spot on the rock 'n' roll map. The museum was formally opened with an extravaganza of a concert at the adjacent Cleveland Memorial Stadium featuring numerous major artists. Springsteen, having just reunited the E Street Band for the *Greatest Hits* album, took the occasion to perform with the band, first backing Chuck Berry and Jerry Lee Lewis, and then running through a long-awaited mini-set of E Street live classics. A far more unassuming but equally unique multi-artist effort took place the following year, when Bruce joined forces with Pete Seeger and numerous other singers for the the Rock Hall's "Hard Travelin'" tribute to folk legend Woody Guthrie.

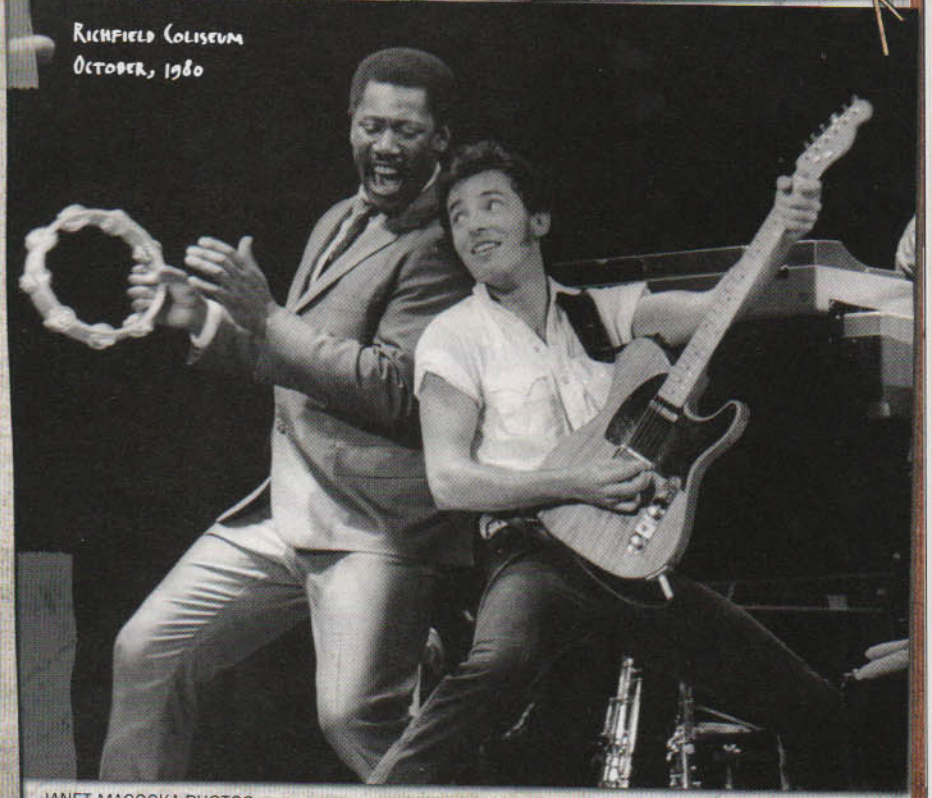
Cleveland has remained an important place for Springsteen. He has returned to his unofficial Midwest home base time and time again, despite it no longer being a market where he can expect to sell out multiple-night stands. Perhaps rising ticket prices were getting too steep for portions of the blue-collar fan base? It is only fitting then, that Cleveland was one of the handful of stops on Springsteen'sVote For Change tour in 2004, and that it hosted one of his 2008 election rallies, during the final stretch of the ultimately fruitful Obama campaign.

Bruce last performed in Cleveland on November 10, 2009, part of an incredible run of performances as he and the E Street Band wound up the Working on a Dream tour that month. That night at the Quicken Loans Arena, they played the *Born to Run* album in its entirety—a most appropriate choice for the town that used to blast "Born to Run" out across the airwaves of Northeast Ohio, signaling the start of the weekend.

—*Magnus Lauglo*



Backstage with Ronnie Spector and a Cleveland Boy
Richfield Coliseum, February 17, 2977



Richfield Coliseum
October, 1980

JANET MACOSKA PHOTOS

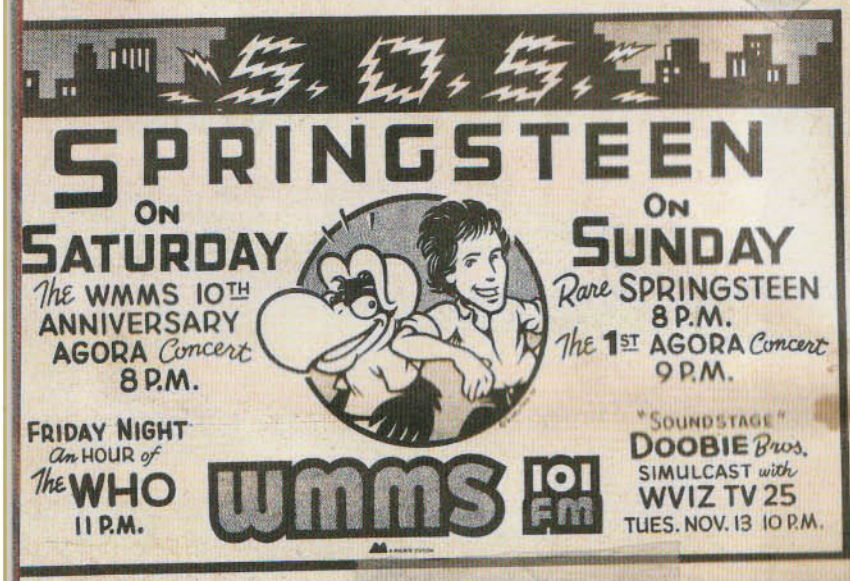
More with Gorman

by MARK SQUIREK

John Gorman's *The Buzzard: Inside the Glory Days of WMMS and Cleveland Rock Radio* tells the story of another time: when radio came to you from a transmitter on the edge of town, when local DJs and knowledgeable programmers knew and understood the town they were broadcasting to, before that tight, deeply personal connection was replaced in so many cases by faceless corporations. As the music programmer for WMMS from the early '70s until the late '80s, Gorman understood his responsibility to both the listener and to the owner. Somehow, he was able to walk a fine line and keep both happy. One side had great music, the other side made a few bucks.

Mixed in with the stories of marketing, advertising and personnel difficulties, Gorman covers the music of the times in *The Buzzard*. Though he writes at length about the station's role in Springsteen's early career, that relationship is by no means the only story in the book: he speaks of Lou Reed, Roxy Music, David Bowie, Fleetwood Mac, Prince, Michael Stanley, Mott the Hoople, and a host of others. They all play a part in the rise of WMMS and its long stay at the top. At the end of it all he tells an insightful version of how the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame ended up in Cleveland.

Gorman spent a few minutes talking to *Backstreets* and was kind enough to offer us a few more observations about Springsteen that didn't make it into his book. Speaking to him today about hearing the advance tape of "Born to Run," Gorman sounds as excited about the song as he did the day first heard it. "'Born to Run' is one of those songs that stops people in their tracks. It is one of the finest pieces of rock 'n' roll ever made. It is a masterpiece."



"Bruce in Cleveland" panel at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's Springsteen Weekend, June 5, 2010

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS PHOTO

ON HIS EARLIEST EXPOSURE TO BRUCE

"Before I moved to Cleveland, I had heard of Bruce but I had no real understanding of who he was. This was mostly because Boston, where I grew up, was a college town and they had students from all along the East Coast. So the kids from Jersey and Philly would talk about him, but I never saw him. I never really heard him until the first album came out. One thing I do remember was that Bruce had lost his notebook with his lyrics while he was in Boston. So had put an ad in the *Cambridge Phoenix* looking for it! When I came to Cleveland, we pulled the first album out. At the time we were so free-form that we could play anything we wanted. Springsteen just didn't do so well at the beginning. With so much going on at the station, our top priority was getting the station on its feet. A *lot* of music fell through the cracks. When the second album came out, it just didn't get the airplay that would have generated the kind of interest it deserved."

BRUCE AND HIS LABEL

"At the beginning of '75 we got an advance tape of 'Born to Run,' the one with strings and female backing vocals. It is a noticeably different version from the one we all know today. I think Columbia gave me the wrong tape! That version still hasn't been released. Kid Leo and I heard it and we both thought it had the power of Phil Spector production married to an incredible storyline. Like I said, it was an instant classic. This was great for WMMS, because the label realized we were outside the New York/Philly axis and that maybe we could be a key to breaking Springsteen. They were right.

THUNDERCRACK AND BEYOND

"When we started playing 'Born to Run,' Bruce just took off. We were looking for anything special that related to Bruce. We wanted to get it to our listeners, many of whom were also really hearing Bruce for the first time. Luckily I was able to meet Ed Sciaky, the programmer from WMMR in Philly. He was a huge Springsteen fan, even before the first album came out. Ed was kind enough to send us an enormous amount of unreleased Bruce. We had so much that people would call and ask when we were going to play 'Thundercrack'—like it was a regular track from an album! We ended up with every outtake we could find: the songs that didn't make the albums, concert cuts, it didn't matter. One song that drove the listeners wild was the original demo of 'Because the Night.' This is the one he sent to Patti Smith so she could work on the chorus. We put that on the air. Bruce was just scatting over the chorus. People loved it."

WHAT HAPPENED TO WMMS'S UNRELEASED TAPES

"The archives were incredible. We had the very first concert Bruce played at the Agora. We had the whole concert. The full version—it must have been three reels! I'm not talking about the '78 show, I'm talking three or four years before that [June 3, 1974]. We kept building the archives until the mid-'80s. Everybody was in there: Bruce, Tom Waits, Mellencamp, Michael Stanley.... It was literally anyone who had stopped by the station or played a concert that we broadcast. When I left the station the archives were not taken as seriously. In the late '80s, early '90s, the station was physically [reducing their] square footage. There was no room for the storage of the archives; they sent the tapes out to a transmitter site. This was a building with no heat or air conditioning. It had a leaky roof. Raccoons and chipmunks were literally living there. As a result, all of the tapes were either lost or ruined through neglect. In some cases, the people in charge made the decision to tape over existing tapes. I didn't find any of this out until '94. I assumed they were intact! None of us had ever made copies, because we always knew where the originals were. That was true with all of us. None of us thought of making dubs. We always thought that people would understand the history that was in those tapes. It never occurred to anyone that someone would be so careless with the tapes."

A VISIT TO WMMS, APRIL 6, 1976. BACK ROW, L - R: STEVE VAN ZANDT, CHARLIE KENDALL, GORMAN, JEFF KINZBACH, STEVE LUSHBAUGH, MATT THE CAT, DENNY SANDERS. FRONT ROW: KID LEO, SPRINGSTEEN, SHELLY STILE, DAN GARFINKEL.

FROM THE BOOK *THE BUZZARD* BY JOHN GORMAN; PHOTO COURTESY DAN KEEFE

CONTINUED FROM P. 40

almost 1,200 tickets. Springsteen and the band, who'd been touring nonstop since May, added to the anticipation and festival atmosphere by arriving in town a day early to hang out with fans such as Jim Kluter, Joe Juhasz, Bill Spratt, and Johnny Kusznier—working-class West Siders who were so obsessed with Springsteen, before his stardom, that they'd driven to New Jersey to meet him and become known as his "Cleveland Boys." By showtime, the band was so relaxed that they cleaned out a pan of homemade lasagna Leo's mother sent backstage. Even Springsteen dug in, violating his rule of not eating before going onstage.

I was nervous, as I've always admitted. This was a major event for us, our listeners, and the other stations simulcasting the concert: WABX in Detroit, WDVE in Pittsburgh, WEBN in Cincinnati, WLVO in Columbus, WXRT in Chicago, KSHE in St. Louis, and KQRS in Minneapolis. A missed cue or a channel cutting out would have made us look bush-league. I wanted this to be the best radio concert of them all. I needn't have worried. To handle the broadcast, Columbia hired Sam Kopper, a former announcer at Boston's WBCN, who had purchased a school bus years earlier and equipped it with a remote recording studio for the specific purpose of broadcasting concerts. Production was supervised by Jimmy Iovine—a young engineer from New York who made his name by being part of John Lennon's comeback entourage and went on to become head of promotion for the Universal Music Group. One audio feed from the Agora went to the bus for radio; a second went upstairs to Agency Recording for a possible "live" album.

The air was literally electric—muggy and rainy outside, with summer lightning crackling, and fans jamming the Agora almost two hours before showtime. Some had even slept on the sidewalk the night before, because it was a general-admission show and they wanted to be up front. They whistled, clapped, and chanted in the background as Denny signed on the broadcast to welcome radio listeners. Leo did the onstage introduction: "I have the duty and the pleasure of welcoming, ladies and gentlemen, the main event. Round for round, pound for pound, there ain't no finer band around—Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band!"

"He must have memorized that at home. I know you did!" Springsteen answered, obviously delighted. "Cleveland, how you doin'? Are you ready to shake them summertime blues?"

The band launched into Eddie Cochran's "Summertime Blues," and then "Badlands." The segue was like launching a rocket. Each song just kept building and building and building.

I know of only one thing that went wrong. Clarence Clemons never showed it in his performance—at one point, he even pulled the future wife of one of the Cleveland Boys onstage to dance—but he was upset because somebody had stolen his portable Nakamichi stereo from his room at Swingos. Springsteen turned the theft to advantage, however, by making a joke about it during a thirteen-minute version of "Growin' Up," in which he told his classic "Teenage Werewolf" story about going with Clemons to meet God. Springsteen also came close to knocking Leo off his feet during the story, by ad libbing that they met him along the way: "I go, 'Kid, what are you doing?' He says, 'Praying for more watts. I gotta blast this baby all the way to New Jersey!'"

The show went on for twenty-one songs, in two sets, and an encore ending with "Raise Your Hand." "I'd like to thank Cleveland for supporting us," Springsteen said. "When we first came here, we got some respect." The broadcast ended past midnight, after more than four hours. Leo read the credits but fully expected Springsteen would do one more encore. Springsteen, nearly spent, returned one more time for a surprise encore of "Twist and Shout" for the Agora crowd. It wasn't carried live, though we broadcast it later. Tape was still rolling, and it was flawless. The broadcast was also flawless, however, which might explain why Columbia never issued it as an album. The radio audience was estimated at three million, and the show was one of Springsteen's most-recorded and most-bootlegged.

Drummer Max Weinberg once called it the best show the E Street Band ever did. One of the greatest compliments I ever got came a few years later from Bob Seger. He said, "Man, I heard the concert you guys put on with Springsteen. That was the greatest rock 'n' roll show I ever heard." He told me he was one of the listeners who ran to his tape machine to record his own copy.

Cementing his ownership of Cleveland, Springsteen returned just three weeks later to play a three-hour concert at the Coliseum. After it ended, he and the E Street Band made an unannounced midnight run to the Agora—taking the stage to perform with Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes. A video of the show was shot for a *Live at the Agora* TV show, but Miami Steve would not allow Springsteen's portion to be broadcast. It turned up later on bootleg copies and, much later, on video-sharing sites on the Internet.

In the summer of 1978, Cleveland was sliding into default. Mayor Dennis Kucinich faced a recall election less than a week after our tenth anniversary show. He and the city council were snarling at each other like rabid dogs. Crime was high and the business climate was deteriorating. Under better circumstances, the Springsteen concert would have been an amazing high. In 1978, it seemed like all we had. The Buzzard was circling, and rock and roll was one of Cleveland's few salvations.

FROM THE BOOK *THE LIGHT IN DARKNESS* (WWW.THELIGHTINDARKNESS.COM)

ALEJANDRO ESCOVEDO

BELIEVES IN THE FAITH

"You've got to get the Bruce stuff up front."

I'm on the phone with the editor/publisher of this magazine. I've expressed some hesitation with the direction of my piece on Alejandro Escovedo, and almost immediately I come the closest to a Jann Wenner-esque pep talk I've had in my years of contributing to *Backstreets.*

"We need to let readers know right away why Alejandro's being featured in a Springsteen magazine. You've got to forget that most of the *[Backstreets]* staff is into him. The truth is that a lot of Bruce's fans probably aren't, and they need to know why we're featuring him."

Well, okay, let's do this:

- ...managed by Jon Landau Management for the last several years;
- biography for last album *Real Animal* wonderfully written by Dave Marsh (as well as the liner notes for the Alejandro tribute CD *Por Vida);*
- one of the few artists to share the stage with Springsteen and the E Street Band playing *his* song ("Always a Friend") rather than Bruce's on the Magic tour;
- a ripping duet with Springsteen ("Faith") on Escovedo's latest album, *Street Songs of Love;*
- and an uncompromising, unironic artistic vision that has never wavered, even in the most dire of circumstances.

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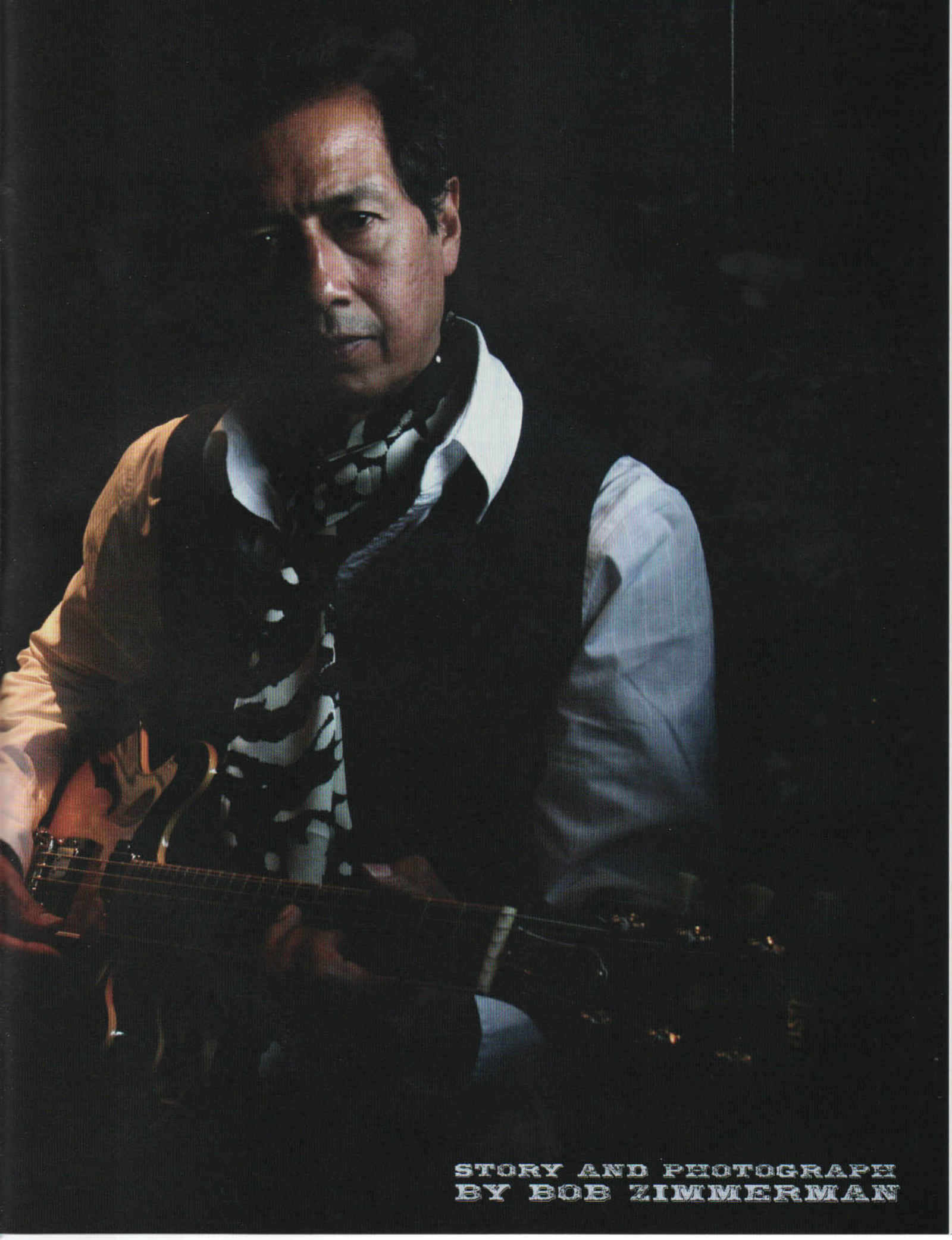

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH
BY BOB ZIMMERMAN

Street Songs of Love is both a departure as well as a welcome progression for Escovedo's solo work. Musically more muscular than Escovedo has been in the last 15 or so years (not counting his Buick MacKane work), the new album finds Alejandro singing about midnight lovers, ghosts from relationships, fathers and sons, girls in parking lots, the faith that can save you. In short, if *Thirteen Years* is Escovedo's *Born to Run*, then *Street Songs of Love* is his *Darkness on the Edge of Town*. In many ways, Alejandro Escovedo represents the path some have imagined Springsteen might have taken had he moved out of New Jersey in 1976 and rented a flat on the Lower East Side. That New York punk aesthetic that has always been hovering close by, but never fully examined.

What should *Backstreets* readers *really* know up front? Escovedo released arguably the three best albums of the 1990s with *Gravity, Thirteen Years* and *With These Hands*, all with Austin production legend Stephen Bruton. Each of these albums came out as the Americana music scene was stretching its wings, and they reached for a whole lot more than twang. Think Dave Edmunds meets early Van Morrison and Los Lobos, with Lou Reed conducting the string section. Like another great American singer, he traveled the U.S. playing epic concerts in dives, with a truncated string section that soared to the highest highs but could acutely underscore the tension in the music when necessary.

And cover songs? While very close in age to Springsteen, Escovedo live would often reach later into the rock 'n' roll canon for songs like Iggy Pop's "I Wanna Be Your Dog," The Rolling Stones "Sway," The Velvet Underground's "Pale Blue Eyes," Neil Young's "Powderfinger," and Ian Hunter's "I Wish I Was Your Mother," to name just a few. His ability to take his show to another level just by using a well-placed cover can be inspiring. "Doing cover songs, for me... they've got to mean *a lot.*" says Escovedo. "You don't just go out there and play any old song. I see a lot of people go out there and they think by doing something by Pet Shop Boys or Madonna, they think it's very clever to do it, but it's boring. I just try to do songs that relate to my life, to me and to my audience."

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#19 • MARCH–APRIL 1998 • $3.95
ALEJANDRO ESCOVEDO:
Artist of the decade

In 1997 a young, up-and-coming Ryan Adams (then of Whiskeytown) so revered Escovedo's body of work that he invited Escovedo to duet on Whiskeytown's "Excuse Me While I Break My Own Heart Tonight" on their major label debut *Stranger's Almanac* (Alejandro also provided harmony vocals on "Not Home Anymore" and the sadly beautiful "Dancing With the Women at the Bar"). When *Stranger's Almanac* got the deluxe two-CD reissue treatment recently, Whiskeytown's cover of Escovedo's True Believers cut "The Rain Won't Help You When It's Over" was included.

The cherry on top of it all was *No Depression* magazine's decision to anoint Escovedo with the title "Artist of the Decade" for the 1990s. You think people argue on BTX? The consternation this caused among some Americana and Roots fans was palpable. Fans were quick to throw out names like Steve Earle, Jeff Tweedy, T-Bone Burnett, Emmylou Harris, Bruce Springsteen and Lucinda Williams as more deserving.

"To a certain extent, it was process of elimination," said Peter Blackstock, former co-publisher/editor of the now defunct *No Depression*.

"Both Steve Earle and Lucinda Williams ended up spending a fair part of the decade on the sidelines (if obviously for different reasons), and in the late-'90s Wilco's rise wasn't complete, so it would've been hard to pick Tweedy over Farrar at that point. Springsteen was just 'bigger' than we tended to aim our focus, and of course everyone already knew everything about Bruce. That was a big positive-point for choosing Escovedo, in fact; both Grant [Alden, co-publisher/editor] and I felt like his albums and his live shows were first-rate, as good as anyone was doing in the '90s, and yet he still flew under some folks' radar. We both strongly believed in the quality of his work, and we also had a sense that if *we* didn't put that name out there in such a discussion, no one else would. We felt he absolutely belonged in the discussion. And just on a personal level, he really was the artist whose music meant the most to me over the full course of that decade. The records were uniformly excellent, and the live shows were frequently transcendent. I saw him play at least 50 times during the '90s."

A live album *More Miles Than Money* (co-produced by *Backstreets* Associate Editor Erik Flannigan) and the curioso release *Bourbonitis Blues* closed out the '90s. But it was 2001's release *A Man Under the Influence* that broke Escovedo through to pockets of the country. Songs like "Rosalie" and "Castanets" got radio airplay—and "Castanets" made it onto George W. Bush's iPod, according to *USA Today*. As a result, Escovedo stopped playing it live until just recently.

It was after release of the record *By the Hand of the Father*, a stage musical and a performance in Tucson, AZ in 2003, when Escovedo would face his greatest challenge. He was rushed to a hospital after spitting up blood during a performance, only to find he had been living with Hepatitis C and was close to death. And without health insurance—clubs in various cities started having star-studded fundraisers to help pay for Escovedo's medical bills. Similar to the *Sweet Relief* projects, friends put together the two CD set *Por Vida: A Tribute to the Songs of Alejandro Escovedo*, which featured artists such as The Jayhawks, Lucinda Williams, Cowboy Junkies, Ian Hunter, M. Ward and more performing his music, with all proceeds benefiting the Alejandro Escovedo Medical & Living Expense Fund.

To say Escovedo was touched by the release of the album would be an understatement. "The first song I heard was 'She Doesn't Live Here Anymore,' by John Cale," he says. "I couldn't believe the sheer beauty of that recording, first of all. And that he had done it and was the first one to commit to the record. And then to hear 'One More Time' by Ian Hunter—I mean, Mott [the Hoople] and what they meant to me as a rock 'n' roll band.... I just sat there and cried. It's very humbling. In the end you realize that people are loving and caring. I mean, I was always the guy that would play other people's benefits... so yeah, it was great." Meanwhile, Alejandro went about the process of healing, which took some time.

After several years on the mend, Alejandro returned with the dark but beautiful *The Boxing Mirror*, produced by Cale. A performance of *The Boxing Mirror* at Joe's Pub with only his string section was both incredibly moving and ultimately draining. "A party killer of a record" is the way Escovedo described it later, laughing.

That brings us to his most recent releases, *Real Animal* and *Street Songs of Love*, both produced by Tony Visconti (of David Bowie and T. Rex production fame). Escovedo looks, sounds and is performing in top-notch form. Just before the release of *Real Animal*, Springsteen released his duet with Escovedo from Houston on the Magic tour as a digital-only download. With *Street Songs of Love*, Escovedo let us know that Bruce not only contributed to the hard rocking "Faith" but also laid down vocals on the opening cut "Anchor," which should see the light of day in the future as a bonus track.

These are all the reasons a good music

fan, a good Springsteen fan, should know about Alejandro Escovedo, a true American musical treasure. And to think we haven't touched upon his time with The Nuns (they were on the bill with the Sex Pistols' final "true" performance in 1978 at Winterland), Rank & File (did they invent cowpunk; some say it's so), the True Believers and Buick MacKane, or The Alejandro Escovedo Orchestra.... Nope, you'll have to dig for all of that yourself.

★ ★ ★ ★

It's a stiflingly hot day in Washington DC, the kind locals, though here forever, talk about with shock and surprise. And no, it's not that dry Austin heat. The District of Columbia, built on a tidal marsh hundreds of years ago, continues to overcome its residents and visitors with unforgiving humidity. Despite all this, the current best-dressed man in the U Street corridor is standing front and center on the 9:30 Club's stage, running his band through soundcheck on Mick Jagger's solo-era chestnut "Evening Gown." Cool and collected, Alejandro Escovedo sings as though he wrote the words himself.

People say I'm a loner
I like to get lost in the crowds
People call me a dresser
I wear my sports clothes way too loud
Yeah but I can still paint the town
All the colors of your evening gown
While I'm waiting for your blonde hair
To turn grey

Upstairs in his dressing room tuning his guitar, and then more recently by phone, Alejandro takes some time to discuss with *Backstreets* the recent changes in his career and life.

***Backstreets:* Tell me about the Bruce show on April 14, 2008, in Houston.**

Escovedo: Well it's funny, because I had no idea what we were walking into when we got invited to the show by Jan Stabile and Barbara Carr and Jon Landau, who had just become my managers. They were looking at their schedules and seeing that they were playing in Houston, and it was close enough to me that I would drive out and we would have dinner. My wife and I were excited about going, but we left a little late, of course, because we always do. We were driving, barreling towards Houston, and suddenly I get this text from Jan that says, "Bruce wants to do 'Always a Friend.' Are you in? Can you make soundcheck in 45 minutes?" We were two hours out *[laughs]*.

So I go, yeah, I'm in, but I can't make soundcheck. Now we're doing like 100 miles an hour trying to get there on time. More texts are coming in, asking me what kind of guitar I'd like to play, and I realize it's becoming more and more of a reality.

So this was very off the cuff?

Oh, yeah. So as we get closer and closer its really dawning on me that I'm going to be playing with Bruce Springsteen. We finally get there pretty late, about 6:30 or 7 p.m. I go to his dressing room—he's meeting people that are out in the hallway. Then he sees me, we shake hands, and we go into his dressing room. He's already got the lyrics written out, and with his acoustic guitar he and I sing it twice. And it's great. And then we just hang out for a little while, just kinda talking about stuff—where he lives, family—and then he calls the E Street Band in, and we go over it acoustically one time. It's pretty amazing, because you look around the room and there's Soozie, and Little Steven, and Max, and Nils, and Garry Tallent.... Actually, I had known Garry Tallent, because we had done something before—it was in Cleveland, a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame event where we got to play together. Anyway, we got to do it once acoustically with the band. And Bruce does these slight arrangement changes, and then I go out to see my first Bruce Springsteen show—I had never seen him.

As the show's about to start, there are a lot of people around that we know. Because we've just had a lot of mutual friends, but also a lot of his fans who had become fans of mine over the years. Richard, and Bernie, and all those guys....

[Laughs]
You know all those guys?

Oh, yeah! Some of them...

I met them a long, long time ago, in Cleveland at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. So they're big Bruce freaks, right? *[Laughs]* And so through them I've met a lot of those people, and I see them all there, and I'm meeting new people, and everyone's very friendly and it's very familial. And then the music starts, and I'm like *"Oh my God!"* I've seen a lot of music in my life—punk rock and the Stooges and everything—but this is one of the most powerful if not *the* most powerful thing I've ever seen.

So I'm just blown away. And I have this setlist, and we're just enjoying it. At first we're just taken in by the music. Everyone's so up, and it's so cool, there's this really cool vibe. And as the setlist is starting to dwindle, I realize we're getting closer to encore time, and I was going to be the first encore. So by this time his road crew, his road manager are coming up to me and asking me if I'm all right, and we start to go to the back of the stage before the last song (of the set) is over.

I'm just standing there, and they get off stage and Bruce comes over with a set of headphones on, listening to ["Always a Friend"] one more time. He goes, "Don't forget the riff," and "we're going to extend this," and that kind of deal. And then he says, "Let me introduce you." And he gave me the most wonderful introduction—about

HIGH NOON

BY MITCH MYERS

The sun hangs high in the Texas sky, and West 4th Street in Austin is totally deserted. Alejandro Escovedo sits motionless in the back room of La Zona Rosa nightclub. Then, slowly, he stands up and begins to strap on his six-string guitar.

A pretty young woman rushes in and pleads with the solemn guitar slinger, "Al, you don't have to go out there! You don't have to prove anything to anyone, all of your albums are great, no matter how little they may have sold! Besides, they've brought in some big names for the South By Southwest music festival this year. It will be suicide! Let's just leave town and go somewhere new and start over."

Alejandro Escovedo smiles ruefully and wipes a tear from the young woman's cheek. "It's too late for a man like me to start over, my dear. I've come too far and seen more miles than money. If this doesn't cut it—well, that's just the way it is."

Outside, the clock tolls twelve and three grizzled men walk down the middle of the street. Neil Young, Elvis Costello, and Bruce Springsteen stare straight ahead—barely aware of the bystanders anxiously watching their every move.

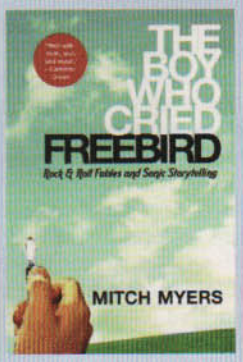
Leaving his woman crying in the back of La Zona Rosa, Alejandro Escovedo steps out into the blinding light to face his fate...

Exactly what happened next is hard to confirm.

Some think Alejando's elegant balladry saved his ass. Others insist it was his ear-bleeding version of the Stooges' "I Wanna Be Your Dog." Me? I say it was his finale of "Gravity/Falling Down Again" segueing straight into Lou Reed's "Street Hassle" that made all of the difference.

Anyway, believe what you want to believe. That's the stuff of legends, ain't it?

"High Noon" by Mitch Myers is excerpted from his book, The Boy Who Cried Freebird: Rock & Roll Fables and Sonic Storytelling, *copyright 2007, published by HarperCollins. Reprinted by permission.*



how he'd been into the records for a long time. It was amazing; it was just a dream come true. And then to step out on that stage.... it's like being a baseball lover, and suddenly the Yankees ask you to play at Yankee Stadium with them, you know? And you think you're an okay ballplayer, you can handle yourself, but all of a sudden you're in a different arena. It's a different world altogether. It's something I've never experienced in my life—18,000 people strong.

When he introduced me, it was a really warm reception. And then we went into the song. For the first verse-and-a-half, I was pretty nervous. I'll be perfectly honest—I was scared to death. But they were just so cool. Little Steven's just looking at me and grooving, and Bruce is obviously having a great time, and he's way into the song. It was ragged, but it was the perfect kind of ragged for me, a rock 'n' roll moment. I've said it before, but I mean it: those four minutes on stage with Bruce were more important than the 33 years I'd spent playing music up to that point.

Why would you say that?

It just changed my life. It was like being blessed by the Dalai Lama, you know? Suddenly [after] all those years of working really hard and struggling, someone said, "You're all right. You deserve to be up here."

You mentioned the folks who are fans of yours and Bruce's, and I know a lot of people like that. For years I always wondered why Bruce hadn't caught on to you and championed you sooner. And after seeing the video [of you and Bruce playing together]—I only heard later on that you were being managed by Landau Management, and I thought to myself, *this is the perfect meeting of two of my favorite artists.*

Well, it is cool. And Barbara told me that they went to Bruce when they were thinking of managing me and asked for his blessing, pretty much.

How did it come about? It's not like Jon Landau Management has a huge roster of clients.

A lot of it was as a result of a gentleman named Ian Ralfini, a vice president of Manhattan Records. I had had a previous manager. I felt like I had been spinning my wheels over and over, and a lot of it has been my fault because of the condition I have been in. But I felt that we had finally made a record that was worthy of some serious support—it was the right record. So when I went looking for a new manager, I talked to a lot of people. When [Ralfini] brought up Barbara Carr and Jon Landau Management, it was really something. I met Barbara and Jan for lunch, and then we did it right away. It just felt right. I felt a connection. That, again, is something that changed my life. Having a manager like that is like a dream come true. I hit the jackpot, you know? Like you said, they don't have a lot of artists. They're not looking for quantity. They seem to be attracted to quality. I guess I'm very lucky.

STOP PRESS: Alejandro and Bruce, together again. July 23, 2010.

MIKE BRAZINSKI PHOTO

The album *Real Animal* ended with the track called "Slow Down," which is something you apparently have not been able to do. Tell me about putting *Street Songs of Love* together—and are any of those songs left over from the *Real Animal* sessions, or is this all brand new?

It's all brand new except for two pieces. Initially "Tula" and "Shelling Rain" were things I had thought about using on the Jonathan Demme soundtrack for *Man From Plains,* the Jimmy Carter documentary. And they've been totally reworked from where they were.

The way we went about this record is that first I wanted to make a real tight kind of guitar-based rock 'n' roll album. I remember talking to a friend when we were winding down the *Real Animal* shows, we were talking about the next album and I said I wanted to make an *Exile on Main Street* kind of album from Texas. He said, "Yeah, but you should also try to combine a kind of Tom Petty/*Exile* record from Texas." And I thought those were the things that always kind of fueled my guitar albums, going back to Buick MacKane and the True Believers; they were all kind of based on that stuff.

So I did not use the strings this time out, and I decided I would use background vocalists. I had my band the Sensitive Boys... so it was two guitars, bass, and drums, and the three background singers, and we began a two-month residency at the Continental Club in South Austin. We presented three new songs a night, acoustically first. Then as we would present them, we would bring the band out, and the songs would start to jell. And I continued to write, bringing new material in as these two months progressed. Tony Visconti came into Austin just before the last Tuesday, and he saw us perform all this new material, and then we went into two days of pre-production here in Austin. Then we headed to Lexington, Kentucky and loaded in and immediately started recording.

So we were totally primed for it. We had worked on the engine as well as we could, and it was souped up and ready to go.

Tell me about getting Ian [Hunter] and Bruce [Springsteen] on this album. Did you decide what songs? Did you provide them with options? How did it all come about?

There was always talk that there was a chance that Bruce might do something on one of our records, but we didn't know when or what that would be. After I tracked the record, I thought the song "Faith" would be perfect for him. If I were going to ask him to do anything, I thought that was the song. Actually, we sent him two songs: we sent him "Anchor," and we sent him "Faith." He put a vocal on "Anchor," which will be released at some time in the future as some sort of bonus track. We're not sure how. But we have just a great version of "Anchor" with him singing on it. And then "Faith" he just nailed—I thought he did a great job on it.

It's nice to hear him in that format, too, you know? Two guitars, bass, and drums, rocking out. I love the way he sings, and he adds so much energy to the track.

It reminded me a lot of his contribution to Mike Ness' solo record. I know there are a lot of fans out there that would love to see Bruce record and tour with just two guitars, bass, and drums. To hear him do it so well on your record, and to have done it on Ness' record, gives us some hope and shows us that it could be done.

I figure he can pretty much do anything.

ON COLLECTING

Searchin' through the dust

New Vinyl Finds

By Eddy Wehbe

The online auction site eBay seems to be gaining even more momentum as the place to sell Bruce items, with listings typically up by around ten percent in recent weeks and a long way ahead of last year. Since the publication of *Backstreets* #88, a few super-rare, high-value Springsteen 7-inch singles have gone on the eBay auction block.

The biggest news has been a highly respected Japanese collector selling around 250 Springsteen 7-inch singles, mostly uncommon pressings from all over the world. He put them up for auction individually in two batches, the first in April and the second in June.

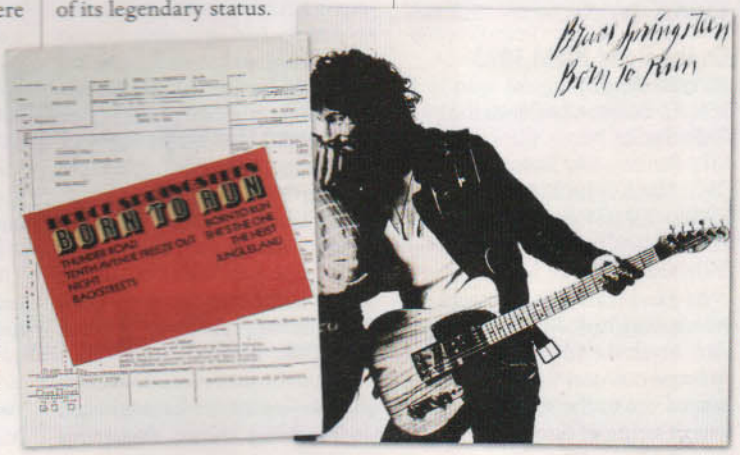
The most notable items from the first batch were a near-mint German "Sandy"/"The E Street Shuffle" (stock copy), a similar quality Dutch "Rosalita"/"Night," and nice (though far from mint) copies of the famous Dutch "Badlands"/"Candy's Room" and the extremely rare Japanese "Brilliant Disguise"/"Lucky Man" white label promo. The first two fetched $1,332 and $787 respectively—very healthy figures—while "Badlands" failed to to attract any takers for the starting bid of $700 and "Brilliant Disguise" fetched only $260 (probably due to the tape mark and writing on the picture insert).

The seller's second batch consisted of 162 singles. There were no major surprises among the results for the high-end items: the very rare Spanish "Sherry Darling"/"Hungry Heart" went for the starting bid of $500; the highly collectable Ireland-only "Springsteen Pack" of four singles reached $337. Though it was certainly unusual that no one was interested in the almost extinct New Zealand "Born to Run"/"Meeting Across the River" 7-inch, which had a modest minimum bid of $200.

The big surprises really came from the mid-to-lower part of the collectibles scale, most notably the Spanish and Canadian pressings. The Spanish "Atlantic City" and "Born in the U.S.A." white label one-sided promos went for $225.50 and $181.50 respectively; the stock copies of the Spanish "Tunnel of Love" and "Spare Parts" singles both crossed the $100 mark, as did the Canadian Hall of Fame edition of "Hungry Heart"/"Fade Away." All of these items had relatively low reserves of typically $20 to $50, so even if the supposed high-end items weren't in great demand, there is still plenty of interest in good quality rare items—particularly, perhaps, from such a well-respected.

Other rare 7-inch eBay auctions included a beautiful, mint copy of the very rare Italian "Badlands"/"Streets of Fire," which went for a bargain price of less than $200. A very unusual (but genuine and mega-collectable) Thai 4-track EP (with one Springsteen track: "Badlands") fetched $255, and a rare Australian pairing of "The River"/"I'm a Rocker" went for around $170.

Starting with the very first issue of this magazine, an item that is regularly mentioned as one of the holy grails of Springsteen collecting is the US "script cover" advance promo LP for *Born to Run*, which to this day hasn't lost an ounce of its legendary status.



Now, the problem isn't so much locating a copy (in fact, quite a few have surfaced at online auctions over the last few years), but finding one in really *great* condition, containing all the original inserts, has proved a real challenge.

Such an uncommon specimen, however, finally found its way onto the open market via eBay in May, 2010. Listed in the site's "Music Memorabilia" section (rather than under "Records"), the LP's sleeve and disc were almost immaculate, and it also came with the original Columbia Records timing sheets, individual lyric sheets, and the all-important track listing insert that still listed "Meeting Across the River" under its original working title of "The Heist." The only thing missing was the elusive outer title envelope in which the record was shipped back in 1975. Only one bidder ended up participating in the auction, eventually winning the item for its minimum bid of $2,499; there's no telling when, if ever, another one in the same overall spectacular condition is going to turn up.

The most stunning (and obscure) new discovery to turn up on eBay in recent years is a 7-inch vinyl single that was previously undocumented and hence completely unknown even to the most rabid of Springsteen collectors: a "Tunnel of Love"/"Two For the Road" white label promo 45 from Venezuela, which came in a die-cut orange/white CBS logo sleeve accompanied by a stamped orange title insert. Appearing out of the blue in a September, 2009 auction, the record caused a stir among Springsteen collectors (and landed a winning bid of $787 from an Italian buyer).

The previously unheard-of record drew discussion to online forums as sleuths attempted to trace the item's origin. As it turned out, no other Venezuelan CBS promo 7-inch (by any artist) looking even remotely similar to the "Tunnel of Love" issue could be found anywhere on the web. That is, until seven months later, when another, almost identically executed promo for "Atlantic City"/"Mansion on the Hill" was offered on eBay by the same seller. It fetched an even higher final bid ($799). For the time being, authenticity of these two items remains somewhat in doubt. If proven genuine, however, they would no doubt rank among the top worldwide rarities on the 7-inch format, easily overshadowing current heavyweights like the U.S. "Spirit in the Night" stock release or the Dutch "Point Blank" 45.

—Additional reporting by Peter Schoefboeck, Mike Simpson, and Massimo Truchet

UNDER GROUND

By Fred Mills

Count Basie Theatre Magic Night

(Crystal Cat 2CD)
VENUE: Count Basie Theatre
CITY: Red Bank, NJ
DATE: May 7, 2008
SOUND QUALITY: 7
PERFORMANCE: 10
PACKAGING: 9

What happens in Jersey stays in Jersey—or perhaps more accurately, what happens in Jersey remains an indelible Jersey product no matter how far and wide it may get exported. That's one lesson fans would learn during the second half of 2009 when the E Street Band took key albums from the back catalog on the road, playing them in their entirety. By some measures, the full-album performances became a part of the expected Springsteen concert ritual, and considering how scores of other artists have adopted a similar ritual of late, a few observers have even proposed that it's had the unintended side effect of diluting the studio albums' power.

For one night in 2008, however, none of that even crossed lucky concertgoers' minds. The May 7 show in Red Bank was a benefit to raise money for the restoration of the 80-year old Basie Theatre, and it came at the conclusion of the spring '08 U.S. leg of the *Magic* tour, prior to the band heading overseas to commence a new European leg. To mark the occasion, Bruce decided to do both *Darkness on the Edge of Town* and *Born to Run* (plus encores, featuring a horn section, of "So Young and in Love," "Kitty's Back," "Rosalita" and "Raise Your Hand"), and those in attendance clearly knew they were getting something extremely special. As *Backstreets* editor Chris Phillips subsequently wrote, "It made for a fascinating, thrilling night... [that] thrill of being wrapped up in bringing it all to life again, right now, didn't fade all night."

Crystal Cat's documentation of the event won't go down as one of the label's finest audio documents; the crowd was simply too excited and noisy for any taper to get anything other than a "good" recording. If proximate sounds such as whoops, clapping, singing along, between-song chatter and the like bother you, seek your musical fix elsewhere. But if you do, you'll be missing an absolutely electrifying experience—can you imagine how the fans felt when the Miami Horns came out for *BTR*'s "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out"?—one which would eventually be approximated but never 100 percent duplicated.

Packaging-wise, CC went above and beyond to ensure that this artifact was special, too. The 12-page booklet contains photos from the event and reproduces lengthy essays and reviews culled from *Backstreets* and *Rolling Stone*, additionally throwing in a two-sided repro of the handwritten setlist. And in a nice touch, the original LP-sleeve fonts for the album titles are also preserved—a small but telling gesture of solidarity extended to Boss fans.

On the Road Night 1973

(Crystal Cat CD)
VENUE: Community Center / Alpha Audio Studios
CITY: Berkeley, CA / Richmond, VA
DATE: March 2, 1973 / May 31, 1973
SOUND QUALITY: 8
PERFORMANCE: 7
PACKAGING: 9

In January of '73, *Greetings From Asbury Park, NJ* was released, and at the end of February, Springsteen and his band were headed out to the West Coast for a short string of dates that included opening for Blood, Sweat and Tears on March 2 at the Berkeley Community Center. The set was relatively brief—seven songs, 40 minutes, including a ten-minute "Thundercrack" finale—but it surely made an impact. Lucky us: it was also preserved via a soundboard recording, and from opening track "Lost in the Flood" through an easygoing, steadily-cresting "Blinded By the Light" to the aforementioned closing tune that goes through a series of bizarre-yet-charming sections (including, as Bruce puts it, the "avant-garde" part), posterity is served in full.

Two months later, on May 31, the band was in Richmond, VA, scheduled to open for Chicago. First they had some promotional duties to attend to at WGOE radio's Alpha Audio studios, where they recorded a six-song acoustic set for eventual broadcast. While it has surfaced on various other boots in the past, it's the perfect pairing for the Berkeley material. Picks to click include a loose-limbed "Does This Bus Stop at 82nd Street" and a lovely "Growin' Up" that spotlights the interplay between Clarence's sax and Danny's accordion; Bruce's offhand, slightly nervous-sounding between-song comments are a treat, too.

Despite the somewhat unwieldy title, this is another winner for CC in both sonics and design. The Berkeley soundboard boasts a dynamics-rich mix, and the only audible flaws are a few moments when the needle gets pushed into the red, resulting in some brief distortion. The Richmond recording, though not as "hot," is very clean, too. The ten-page booklet is smartly decorated with photos and memorabilia (including a repro of a July '73 Alpha Audio newsletter in which Springsteen's recent appearance was touted), making this a wonderful time capsule.

Gothenburg First Magic Night
Gothenburg Second Magic Night

(Crystal Cat 4CD / 3CD)
VENUE: Ullevi
CITY: Gothenburg, Sweden
DATE: July 4 & 5, 2008
SOUND QUALITY: 8 / 7
PERFORMANCE: 9 / 10
PACKAGING: 9 / 9

Don't think of these as dueling releases—with the back-to-back Gothenburg shows featuring

radically different setlists, you could do worse than pick up both for a kind of Euro Magic tour overview. As noted in the setlists section of Backstreets.com, the second evening featured no less than 17 songs not performed the previous evening, with the *Magic* album itself being somewhat deemphasized in order to spotlight a slew of rarities and early gems such as "Roulette," "Drive All Night" and so-called stadium-wrecker "Twist and Shout."

First Magic has a very slight edge over *Second*, sound-wise, thanks to more presence and immediacy; the latter recording has some telltale stadium echo, suggesting the taper wasn't as close to the PA that night. It's so subtle a difference, however, that one would be hard-pressed to give either a thumbs-up or thumbs-down on that basis. It's worth noting that the audience was positively wild for both nights, so there's a fair amount of clapping and cheering heard on the recordings.

Each set comes with a 20-page main booklet and a bonus six-pager featuring additional photos and a review of the show; also included are insert repros of the setlists. And for *First Magic* Crystal Cat throws in a bonus fourth CD taken from the Sirius Satellite Radio partial broadcast of the concert. Interestingly, the audience recording sounds better to these ears—the broadcast has a distracting trebly quality—but it's still a nice freebie.

BONUS TRACKS, *FIRST MAGIC:* "Held Up Without a Gun" (7/28/08); "Light of Day," "Brilliant Disguise," "Pretty Flamingo," "Blinded By the Light," "Jersey Girl" (7/31/08)

BONUS TRACKS, *SECOND MAGIC:* "Tunnel of Love," "Little Latin Lupe Lu," "Who'll Stop the Rain," "Youngstown," "Murder Incorporated," "I'm Goin' Down" (8/2/08); "Souls of the Departed," "Wild Billy's Circus Story" (4/27/08)

Pièce de Résistance Revisited
(Anubis 3CDR)
VENUE: Capitol Theatre
CITY: Passaic, NJ
DATE: September 19, 1978
SOUND QUALITY: 9
PERFORMANCE: 9
PACKAGING: 8

It may seem risky to reboot such a well-known (and -circulated) show as the Capitol Theatre FM broadcast from the Darkness tour; one can't imagine it not already being on the shelf of pretty much every Springsteen collector. A product of the vinyl bootleg years, *Pièce de Résistance* has reappeared several times on CD: most notably Great Dane's 1990 release by the same name, and then about a decade later as *Passaic Night* on Crystal Cat. With a healthy selection of bonus tracks, and with much improved audio quality over all previous releases, *Passaic Night* became the definitive document.

So what Anubis has done is return to the original broadcast by way of a pristine tape source to recreate what radio listeners actually heard that night coming over the WNEW-FM airwaves. For *Revisited* you now get the commentary from DJs Richard Neer and Pat Dawson, while a pre-taped interview that DJ Vin Scelsa had conducted earlier in the week with Bruce is aired during the break between the first and second sets.

The result is a you-are-there vibe that members of the podcast generation may find intriguing, while old-timers will get a knowing chuckle or two. As a bonus, in addition to an eight-page color booklet, Anubis has created a miniature reproduction of the 12-page Capitol Theatre program from that night.

The sonics are more or less comparable to Crystal Cat's (on both there are a few airwave-related flaws, but nothing too distracting). So while folks owning the previous iteration may debate whether or not they need the DJ chatter, those who don't have the Passaic show or are looking for a choice Darkness tour artifact won't be disappointed.

The Roxy Theatre Night 1975
(Crystal Cat 2CD)
VENUE: Roxy Theatre
CITY: Los Angeles, CA
DATE: October 17, 1975
SOUND QUALITY: 9
PERFORMANCE: 9
PACKAGING: 10

Ah, Roxy, good to see you again—how have ya been all these years? Longtime Bruce buffs already have an intimate relationship with this *BTR*-era show, an oft-reproduced FM broadcast (KWST, Los Angeles) originally booted during the vinyl era (*Ain't Nobody Here From Billboard Tonight*). The classic concert was subsequently reincarnated on CD on a number of occasions, with varying degrees of success: 1990's *Backstreets*, from Chapter One, used a staticy, scratchy vinyl source, while Moonlight's *Ain't Nobody Here From Billboard Tonight*, from '96, utilized an okay-but-far-from-perfect tape of the broadcast.

Returning to the Roxy well for a fresh dip, then, is Crystal Cat, and the results are just about as good as one could wish from a recording of this vintage. There's no indication whether the transparent tabby tapped a fresh tape source or cleaned up an already circulating one, but with sound quality this punchy and immediate, it's a moot point. The mix is generally consistent; some very slight, momentary dropouts occur, but other than that, it's a solid b-cast. It's also a singular document of a killer tour, with most of *BTR* performed along with "Spirit in the Night," "Pretty Flamingo," "Rosalita" and other goodies—including some vintage Bruce storytelling—dotting the setlist.

A fat 20-page booklet bursting with period-appropriate photos, repros of the *Time* and *Newsweek* covers, a 1976 *Playboy* story and more rounds things out.

BONUS TRACKS: "Jungleland," "Kitty's Back" (Bottom Line, NYC, 7/14/75); "The E Street Shuffle" (Bottom Line, NYC, 8/75)

This Guns For Hire
(Anubis 3CDR)
VENUE: Spectrum
CITY: Philadelphia, PA
DATE: Sept. 18, 1984
SOUND QUALITY: 7
PERFORMANCE: 8
PACKAGING: 6

During the vinyl era, the five-LP set *This Guns* [sic] *For Hire*, released on the Paladin label, was considered one of the primo Brucelegs; for an audience recording it was, in fact, quite impressive. After CDs came into the picture the recording went through a couple of rebootings (such as Collectors Dream's 1994 title *Sounds of Philadelphia*), but eventually several superior documents of the *Born in the U.S.A.* era turned up to supplant it.

Still, the Spectrum show has always been worth checking out, so Anubis has stepped up to the plate with the latest offering in the label's "Vinyl Plus Series" of so-called golden era bootlegs, cleaned up and restored in what could be considered "best-ever" sound quality.

Packaging is nominal, just a four-page booklet and front/rear tray panels that shrink down and reproduce the actual LP artwork. But the sonics are consistently appealing, with only a few audible vestiges of the original vinyl's pops, clicks and hiss.

Overall, *This Guns For Hire* makes for a credible and entertaining flashback—right down to the 1984 MTV interview conducted by VJ Mark Goodman (!) that appears at the very end of disc three.

the backstreets jukebox

1. Alejandro Escovedo
Street Songs of Love
Fantasy (CD)

2. The Rolling Stones
Exile on Main Street [Super Deluxe Edition]
Hip-O (2CD/2LP/DVD)

3. The Hold Steady
Heaven is Whenever
Vagrant (CD)

4. Naked Raygun
7" Series #1 and 2
Riot Fest (7-inch)

5. Fever Ray
Fever Ray
Mute (CD)

6. Tom Waits
Glitter and Doom Live
Anti (CD)

7. Tim Curry
...from the vaults
Ode (MP3)

8. Greg Dulli
Dangerous Highway: A Tribute to the Songs of Eddie Hinton
Shake It! (7-inch)

9. Unkle
Where Did the Night Fall
Surrender All (CD)

10. Matthew Sweet
Sunshine Lies
Shout Factory (CD)

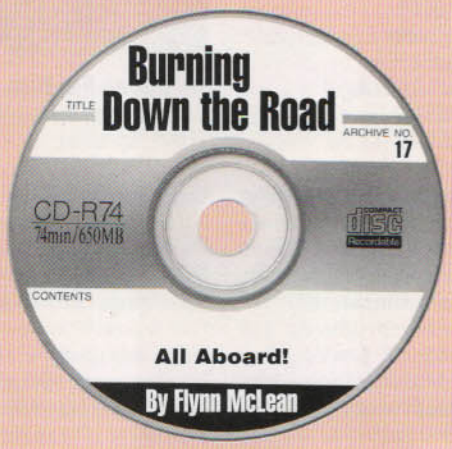
10 records that helped make this issue possible

After nearly two straight years of touring from Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band, we have been flooded with new recordings from the Magic and Working on a Dream tours; last issue, we covered the best of the bunch. But before we can close that chapter, there are still a few, um, loose ends to tie up.

Two compilation sets aimed to serve as complete documents of the Working on a Dream tour, each including a version of every song performed over the course of the entire tour—or at least every song for which we have a recording (oh, where are you, recordings of Penn State and the November show in Washington, DC?). The first set, *Can't Stop This Train*, a 22-disc opus, featured a blueprint similar to other "Flynn Compilations" from the past. The first three discs make up what would constitute an ideal show within the parameters established by Bruce (with some liberties taken by the compiler). The next 11 discs feature most of the remaining songs performed on the tour, followed by a single disc of broadcast highlights. Finally, seven discs contain performances of each of the six albums Bruce tackled over the last two months of the tour. A mix of performance and sound quality were the primary factors in song selection, with sound quality receiving slightly more weight in the decision process.

When looking at every song performed over the course of these tour, the sheer number of different songs is quite daunting, thanks in large part to the "Stump the Band" section of the shows. Through the use of "those fabulous homemade signs," fans requested songs across genres and eras, from the obvious, like "Travelling Band" and "Born to be Wild," to the more obscure, such as "Seventh Son" and "Dark End of the Street." The main point of creating these compilations is to have all those songs in one place, with the unusual performances and key moments alongside the tour staples and standards, to make for one really cool listening party. Many, many songs were only performed once or twice, and with those real rarities one after another, the resulting combinations bring new light to the songs themselves. For example, "Satisfaction" and "Mony Mony" were only done a few times each, although never at the same show; when one segues right into the next on disc 11 of *Can't Stop This Train*, the bar band atmosphere is taken to the next level. Or when "Queen of the Supermarket" flows right into "I Wanna Marry You" on disc 10, both songs take on a slightly different meaning. And of course, when you have so many great songs back-to-back-to-back, like on disc 2, where "My Love Will Not Let You Down" goes into "Human Touch," which goes into "Long Walk Home" without any kind of break, the cumulative result highlights Bruce's amazing output over just part of his 37-year career.

In attempting to create a comprehensive document of the tour, *Can't Stop This Train* also included full performances of each album, along with some era-appropriate songs as bonus tracks. Such extras included "Murder Incorporated" and "This Hard Land" for the *Born in the U.S.A.* show (sourced from the October 9, 2009 recording from SCB); Bruce and Patti Smith joining U2 for "Because the Night" on the *Darkness* show disc (sourced from Flying Gonz' excellent recording from October 14, 2009); and "Loose Ends," "Be True," "Roulette," and "Restless Nights" as bonus tracks for the *River* performance, which was taken from Hoserama's tremendous, near-release quality wireless/audience mix.



A second compilation, the 17-disc *Working on a Wrecking Ball*, was put together by Ceoil Deas and takes a different approach in that the songs are sequenced in the order in which they appeared over the course of the tour—i.e., in debut order, excluding the rehearsal shows in Asbury Park—although the first performance of the tour was not always the one included in the set. Just like *Can't Stop This Train*, performance and sound quality were the top considerations in choosing each song's source. *Working on a Wrecking Ball* features far more extensive broadcast highlights and other non-tour shows than *Can't Stop This Train*, including all the songs from *Spectacle* with Elvis Costello, all of the songs from the Hall of Fame shows from late October where Bruce performed with other artists, and the entirety of Bruce's participation at the Light of Day show from January 16, 2010.

Indeed, Bruce's first post-tour performance was at that tenth annual Light of Day benefit concert in Asbury Park, NJ, and two tapers were on-hand to make sure that more than just those in the Paramount Theatre who could hear the show. Bakerstfuff's recording best captured Bruce with several friends rocking against Parkinson's Disease. In addition to Bruce's extended set with Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers, the recording also includes "Heaven Help the Lonely" with Willie Nile and "Broken Radio" with Jesse Malin. Of particular note are the extended bluesy rendition of "Pink Cadillac" and the first public performance of "Another Thin Line" featuring both Bruce and Grushecky.

Several archival recordings of note have circulated over the last couple of years as well. Let's start with a fresh transfer of a show that was part of the original inspiration of the very magazine you hold in your hands: Seattle, Washington, December 20, 1978. This is the only known recording of this show, as it circulated on cassette and then was released on CD under the titles *Pretty Flamingo* and *This Is For the Crazies*, so it's not totally new. The crew at JEMS did a fresh transfer of the original reel-to-reel master tapes utilizing new technology that captured the audio at the highest quality possible—with minimal post-prod from Ev2—and released it under the title *Seattle Ho-Ho-Ho*. The results, to put it simply, are stunning: it feels like you're hearing the show for the first time, as the music sounds far more vibrant and dynamic. There were some taper troubles during the first two songs of the night ("Badlands" and "Streets of Fire"), which previous releases of this show had replaced with sources from other shows, but those original performances are included here (or at least as much of them as were captured that night). Of course, it's the *last* two songs of the night that took this show from "end-of-tour amazing" to "what the heck was that?!"—Bruce returned to the stage ten minutes after the show had ended to play "Rave On" and "Twist and Shout," just "for the crazies" who remained in the arena. Charles Cross, founder and original editor of *Backstreets* magazine, wrote extensively about this one show in the debut issue of the magazine as well as in the introduction to the Backstreets book, *Springsteen: The Man and His Music*. The show itself is classic Darkness tour '78, as most of the staples that made that tour great are here, with the lone exception of "Racing in the Street." There are some rarities as well, including "The Fever," "Rendezvous," and the very rare "Pretty Flamingo."

Seattle wasn't the only '78 show to get a fresh look recently, as a previously uncirculated recording of the August 26, 1978 show from Providence, RI made the rounds on the various torrent sites earlier this year. Like the Seattle show above, the transfer was made using excellent technology to ensure the best possible sound. And what sound quality it is; this one belongs in the top echelon of 1978 audience recordings. Unfortunately, it's only the first set of the show—venue security obviously kept their eyes open for more than just the occasional joint—with "Jungleland" cutting off just as the Rat's own dream guns him down. But that first set is typical mind-blowing '78, with an opening "Summertime Blues" plus "Streets of Fire," "Heartbreak Hotel," and the extended "Prove It All Night" with a guitar solo that just explodes out of your speakers.

ON DISC

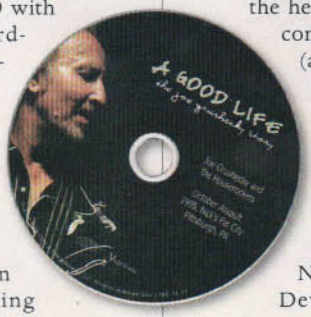
By Peter Schoefboeck

Let's start off this column with a little postscript to last issue's round-up of international *Working on a Dream* formats. Another interesting variant has surfaced from Mexico, where the basic CD-only configuration was packaged inside a 12 x 5 longbox, the cardboard considerably thinner than standard longboxes and thus more fragile. All flimsiness aside, the fact that no other North American longbox package of the album was released makes this Mexican oddity highly collectable. Another related item of note is a very handsome—and quite rare—"Working on a Dream" one-track picture disc CD-R single (in slimline jewel case with full artwork) handed out to attendees of *The Wrestler* movie premieres at selected cinemas throughout Finland in January 2009.

A proposed seven-CD "Springsteen Tour Pack" (consisting of the three E Street Band concert releases *Live/1975-85, Live in New York City* and *Hammersmith Odeon, London '75,* collectively repackaged in a cardboard outer slipcase) never materialized beyond a small cover scan temporarily posted on the label's Czech website. However, Sony Europe eventually did come through with a new Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band *Greatest Hits* compilation, commemorating the Working on a Dream tour's European outdoor leg in late May 2009. Available in both a regular jewel case and a limited-edition digipak, this disc added six different selections to the earlier 12-track *Greatest Hits* (the "Wal-Mart exclusive" issued in the U.S./Canada) for a total of 18 full-band studio and live cuts from 1973 to 2007. Alternate cover artwork depicted a yellow-tinted group shot from the *Magic* era. Obviously catering to a casual demographic, the CD did pretty well chart-wise in most markets that Bruce covered throughout that tour, serving just fine as a concert souvenir for music consumers who didn't already know the complete Springsteen oeuvre by heart. Additionally, "My Lucky Day" was distributed a second time as a one-track promo CD-R in both Holland and the U.K. to coincide with Bruce's festival appearances in those countries.

The late summer and fall of 2009 again saw a series of notable Springsteen guest appearances on other artists' works released within just two months. John Fogerty's *The Blue Ridge Rangers Rides Again* (available in three different configurations including a 180-gram vinyl 2-LP set) featured a full-blown duet with Bruce on the Everly Brothers cover "When Will I Be Loved." Bruce also contributed support vocals to "Sea of Heartbreak" on Rosanne Cash's album *The List* (again issued on both CD and vinyl). And last but certainly not least, there was another team-up with old pal Joe Grushecky, whose new album *East Carson Street* contains a studio duet of their co-penned song "Another Thin Line" plus additional guitar work from Springsteen on two more tracks. "Another Thin Line" was first performed live by Springsteen and the E Street Band back in 2000; the album version, marking the song's first official release, features Bruce and Joe trading lead vocals.

Speaking of Pennsylvania's finest and most underrated rocker: *A Good Life*, the excellent 2007 documentary DVD chronicling Grushecky's adventurous career, saw a "special edition" revamping in October 2009. The new version now includes a bonus audio CD with eight live recordings from a two-night stand at Nick's Fat City in Pittsburgh in October 1995, featuring Springsteen as an "honorary Houserocker" on guitar and backing vocals. (Five of those tracks were previously released, spread over two different, long out-of-print "Labor of Love" CD singles released in the U.K. in 1996).



A new and exclusive solo acoustic recording of "The Ghost of Tom Joad" that Bruce donated to the History Channel's TV documentary *The People Speak* appeared on the film's accompanying various artists soundtrack album from Verve/Universal. An Extended Edition DVD for *The People Speak*, meanwhile, included Springsteen's new recording of "This Land is Your Land."

Also on the DVD front, one release that may have been overlooked by fans awaiting Springsteen's full-fledged *London Calling: Live in Hyde Park* came from HBO Home Video, which in mid-April 2010 put out a two-disc package entitled *The Official Inaugural Celebration* to little fanfare. The DVDs include HBO's original TV broadcast footage of the star-studded "We Are One" concert commemorating Barack Obama's presidential inauguration at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, on January 18, 2009. Bruce is one of numerous artists featured, performing "The Rising" in a solo acoustic version (backed up by a massive, red-robed gospel choir) as well as "This Land is Your Land" with Pete Seeger (and another choir, now in red and blue robes, plus George Lucas singing along in the audience). If nothing else, this DVD is an interesting document that shows Springsteen at the height of his political commitment thus far (although by doing so, it certainly won't appeal to everybody).

On to vinyl: Following the limited-edition "What Love Can Do"/"A Night with the Jersey Devil" 45 issued the previous year, Columbia Records thankfully provided another exclusive Springsteen vinyl release for the 2010 Record Store Day campaign. This year's was a 10-inch single containing live versions of "Wrecking Ball" and "The Ghost of Tom Joad" (featuring Rage Against the Machine's Tom Morello on guitar) recorded in 2009 and 2008, respectively. Both recordings had previously been available as digital downloads only. The record came in a superb black-and-white picture sleeve that utilized the same artwork as the earlier "Wrecking Ball" iTunes single (see last issue's "On Line" column), a cool Jo Lopez stage shot of Bruce taken during the Working on a Dream tour stop in Vienna, Austria. Completist collectors, of course, have sought out both the European and U.S. pressings, not least because the sleeve for the American issue is slightly larger in size.

A word of warning in regards to a vinyl picture disc for *The Ghost of Tom Joad* LP that surfaced on the collectors' market (i. e., eBay) earlier this year: like its preceding colored (blue or green) vinyl variants, the picture disc is unquestionably fake, so make sure to steer clear. This annoying current trend of pseudo-official items began about two years ago with the appearance of numerous other fake picture disc LPs apparently manufactured in Canada or Brazil. *Caveat emptor!*

Additional reporting by Alessandro Cattaneo, Josef Schrefel, Massimo Truchet and Jyrki Virta.

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MAGICAL BRUCE COLLECTION OF RARE DVDs, CDs from '73 to the present. Also have promo stuff, posters, autographs, etc. SASE for list: Rarities, P.O. Box 1456, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272, or email Bruce_Juice@yahoo.com.

SPRINGSTEEN FANS: *GREETINGS FROM* *Asbury Park NJ: A Look at the Local Scene* book puts you right there in time and history as it happened, covering Bruce's rising career from 1973 to 1983 including some great photography of Springsteen and the Jersey Shore. 300 pages, 8.5" x 11". View sample photos at greetingsfromasburyparknewjersey.com.

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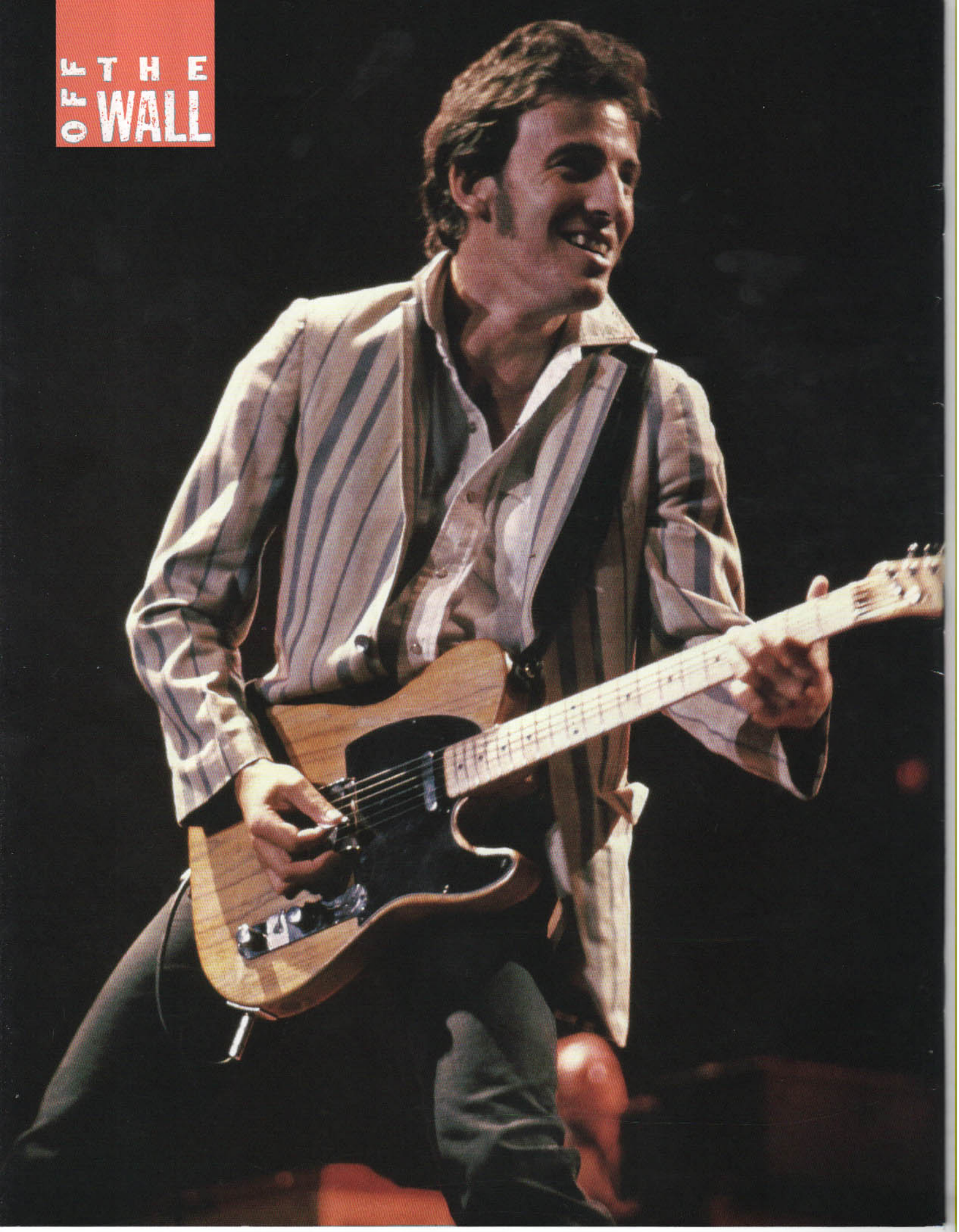
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